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ABSTRACT

The CHALLENGES Literacy Project, a 2-year government-funded demonstration project, supported volunteer tutor programs to meet the literacy needs of adults with developmental disabilities in Alberta, Canada. Of the 20 students in the program, most were female; most were aged 20-29; 3 spoke English as a Second Language; 12 lived with family; 18 were in special school programs; most received further education/training; and most were employed. Of the 26 tutors, most were females, 20-39 years old, and employed; most had earned a university degree; and 8 had formal/classroom teaching experience. The project attracted a competent group of tutors, the majority of whom stayed until the project's completion. The program benefited from five factors/beliefs: (1) tutors and students are partners in learning; (2) there is no set curriculum or strategy; (3) reading and writing are meaning-centered processes; (4) work should progress from whole to parts; and (5) teaching should be concrete. Different teaching strategies were used for stage 1, 2, and 3 learners. The coordinator's role involved advocacy, approachability, and availability. This report consists largely of practitioners' personal accounts of the project supplemented by numerous case studies. Two appendices contain 16 references and an annotated bibliography. The bibliography provides publishers and prices of 11 adult reading series, lists other print and video resources, and gives addresses of 8 resource organizations. (NLA)

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Meeting Challenges:

**A literacy project for adults
with developmental disabilities.**

by

Maureen Sanders

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I would like to thank the tutors and students of the CHALLENGES Literacy Project for their participation in the project. I very much appreciated their commitment to teaching and learning, the insights they shared, and their comments on sections of this book. Many thanks also to Moira Hooton who worked with me throughout the project, and who compiled the annotated bibliography of resource materials.

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In most instances the real first names of students and tutors were used in this text. However, a few participants chose to use pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity.

Introduction

Despite the increased visibility of the problem of illiteracy in Canada, there is one group of Canadians that is rarely even included in the statistics. This group of people labelled developmentally disabled or mentally handicapped, may have at least three times the rate of illiteracy as the population at large. In fact it has been estimated that 60% have not attained a grade nine level of education (G. Allan Roeher Institute, 1990). Yet people with developmental disabilities continue to find it much more difficult than others to gain access to adult basic education and literacy tutoring programs.

Grant MacEwan Community College has, for the past 6 years, provided the only literacy program in Edmonton specifically designed to meet the learning needs of these adults. The program has taken the form of small group classes at various levels of ability. A number of people with developmental disabilities have also approached volunteer tutoring programs such as the PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Program. However, they must often wait for a tutor much longer than anyone else, perhaps two years or more in comparison with three months or less for 88% of adults on literacy program waiting lists (Report on the Alberta Literacy Inventory, 1990).

Yet the demand for literacy education for

people with developmental disabilities is increasing. In recent years, considerable emphasis has been placed on enabling people with disabilities to live as independently as possible. But it is very often the lack of literacy and numeracy skills that prevent people from achieving their potential for independence. A recent estimate by Alberta Family and Social Services suggests that there are 700 people with developmental disabilities in the Edmonton area who may be in need of literacy education to enable them to participate more fully in the community.

In order to address this growing need, the PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Program, with the support of Grant MacEwan Community College, set up the CHALLENGES Literacy Project, a two-year demonstration project funded by the Department of the Secretary of State and the Government of Alberta under the National Literacy Partnership Strategy. The overall intention of the project was to support and develop the ability of volunteer tutor programs to meet the literacy needs of adults with developmental disabilities, and thus to extend the options for special-needs learners in Alberta.

The project started in November 1989 with myself as coordinator, and Moira Hooton was hired as a part-time assistant

This group of people... may have at least three times the rate of illiteracy as the population at large.

The inclusion of adults with developmental disabilities in volunteer tutoring programs is not only fair and just, but also desirable, attainable and worthwhile.

in January 1990. The tutoring phase took place from March 1990 until June 1991 and the project concluded in October 1991 with dissemination of information about the project to literacy coordinators around the province.

This book is the culmination of the work of the 60 or so people associated with the CHALLENGES project – the students, tutors and other volunteers, advisory committee members and staff. It is not intended to offer definitive solutions or prescriptive answers to people's questions about tutoring adults with developmental handicaps. Rather, it is intended to show primarily that the inclusion of adults with developmental disabilities in volunteer tutoring programs is not only fair and just, but also desirable, attainable and worthwhile. Through stories of the students and tutors in the project, and through descriptions of successful use of strategies and techniques, I want to show that volunteer tutors can work well with students who have more difficulty than most learning, and that these students can make good progress, given one-on-one teaching. Many of the techniques used will be familiar to literacy workers; the focus here is on their effective use in work with adults who have developmental disabilities.

To begin with, I'd like to tell you the story of Bonnie, the student who loves to draw, and one of the first students to enter the project. I chose this story as an introduction to the CHALLENGES work because it illustrates many of the difficulties, as well as many of the rewards we face when teaching literacy to adults who have experienced years of failure, and who, moreover, are labelled in ways that suggest they are not capable of learning.

There were others in the project who made larger measurable gains in reading and writing than Bonnie. But Bonnie's

gains have been huge in terms of her self-esteem, her growing confidence and self-reliance, her willingness to take risks, and her belief that she can read and write. Too often we do not allow sufficient time for this growth to occur before we begin, again, to talk about failure. But we have to realize that it takes time to overcome thirty or forty years of failure and negative labelling. Thanks to Janet, her tutor, Bonnie has been given this time. Her awareness of and recognition of print are gathering momentum, and we know that it is only a matter of a little more time before she makes that next leap towards becoming an independent reader and writer.

The Student Who Loves To Draw

Bonnie entered the CHALLENGES Literacy Project as one of its first students in March 1990. At the time, she was thirty-seven years old and was moving from one approved home to another, which had unsettled her.

Our first impressions of Bonnie were that she was quite withdrawn and extremely apprehensive about literacy activities. During the initial assessment she became agitated when she was unable to complete tasks, and she scored low on all tasks including the identification of everyday print in the context of pictures. She was assessed as a very beginning stage one reader who was lacking in confidence, and who did not seem to see reading as a meaningful process.

A Slow Start

Bonnie began working with her tutor, Janet, and they met twice a week for two-hour sessions in the CHALLENGES Learning Centre. Janet has a teaching background and a little experience in special education. Fortunately, she also had the wisdom to give Bonnie considerable time and space to come to literacy in her own way. For the first few months Bonnie wished to do little more than draw, an activity she did very well and in which she experienced considerable success. Her artistic talents extended also to needlework, which she loved to do in her spare time.

The proprietor of her new approved home is an art teacher who holds art classes at her home, and Bonnie was participating in these classes. Bonnie's drawings soon began to fill the bulletin boards and walls of the Learning Centre; she told us, "I'm going to make pictures for you everywhere." She was meticulous about her drawings and always attempted to get them "just right". When all of the students made written contributions to the travelling book to celebrate International Literacy Year, Bonnie's illustrations added considerable beauty to the pages, and she was extremely proud of this accomplishment. She liked to copy, and she often printed words to label her pictures. But, in general, Bonnie steered clear of reading and writing as much as possible.

"Positive and Conscientious"

By the end of June, when we started a summer break, Janet commented that Bonnie displayed "a positive and conscientious attitude towards learning". She said that as Bonnie's "level of self-confidence and success rate increased, the tendency to 'avoid' and 'sidetrack' similarly decreased." Her stalling for time was seen by Janet as "a form of personal protection to prevent her being given unknown materials or new concepts to be learned." She added: "It's not that Bonnie does not possess the desire to learn. In fact, Bonnie does indeed want to be able

*"I'm going to
make pictures
for you
everywhere"*
-Bonnie

"She appeared intimidated by the presence of paper and pencil."

-Janet

to read and write and sees significant value in same. Stated simply, Bonnie feels extremely 'bad' when making mistakes. The need to stay in her 'comfort zone' is great. At the same time, however, she has made very good progress in this area".

While Bonnie's recognition of family names was now well-developed, she had developed little other sight vocabulary. However, Bonnie enjoyed listening to stories very much and always related them well to her own experience. Janet also noted Bonnie's willingness to take responsibility for her own learning, in that she brought a variety of reading material from home. Bonnie also printed beautifully and was proud of this ability. However, she was not yet willing to risk writing anything on her own, preferring to copy her own dictated texts or other extracts from stories and poems.

Janet commented that when writing language experience stories, Bonnie was at first hesitant to put ideas into sentence form: "She appeared intimidated by the presence of paper and pencil." Use of "word webbing proved useful in overcoming this problem." Small pictures drawn above some of the words in language experience stories also proved helpful for both word recognition purposes and to boost self-esteem and self-confidence. During the completion of a photo-story about her new job, Bonnie experienced little difficulty in composing meaningful, detailed sentences, being quite precise in what she wanted to say.

Moving Forward

Bonnie returned to classes in the fall and seemed very happy to be back. She had been on a weight loss program and was proud of her new trim look. We noticed that although she hadn't seemed to know our names before, she was now using the names of students, tutors and staff in the program quite naturally. She enjoyed arriving early each day

(sometimes a little too early!) to tell us about the important things in her life, and she looked to us for reassurance about less pleasant events such as unkind harassment by teenagers on the bus.

As she settled back into the routine of classes, with Janet still her tutor, several factors moved Bonnie forward substantially in her development of literacy skills. Knowing of Bonnie's interest in her own family stories (her mother had written a family history), Janet began encouraging Bonnie to write language experience stories about her childhood on the farm. At the same time, they were working on the concept of story structure and over several classes they looked at the elements of a story. After a visit to the public library to choose some books, Janet also began reading *Charlotte's Web* to Bonnie, a story she greatly enjoyed since it was set on a farm.

Suddenly, Bonnie seemed to make the connection between reading stories she liked and telling her own stories, and she began to tell her stories quite fluently, as Janet scribed. Bonnie then illustrated her stories beautifully with pen and ink drawings (see page 6). Janet read all of Bonnie's stories into a tape recorder so that she could practise reading them on her own, and Bonnie took them home to read each day. They also began working on math skills because Bonnie was keen to be able to budget her money, balance her cheque-book and manage her finances more independently.

Growing Confidence

When I re-assessed Bonnie in May 1991 she chose a couple of her stories to read to me. One was several pages long, yet she read it quite fluently and with little of the anxiety I had observed a year previously. She had also written her story out on individual sentence cards and was able to match them to the original story very well.

Bonnie was not yet able to obtain an acceptable score on any level of an informal reading inventory, although she was able to identify a small number of words in isolation on the two beginning level word lists. Had this been the only measure of progress we used, it would have seemed that Bonnie had not moved too far. Yet we knew that she had come a very long way since her initial, apprehensive encounter with the program.

Her level of confidence had grown enormously, to the point that she was even able to disregard the taunts of the teenagers on the bus: "I just walk right to the back and ignore them" she told us. After she and Janet were invited to sit on the CHALLENGES Advisory Committee as student and tutor representatives, she was able to talk about "people who are handicapped", rather than the euphemistic "people my age" she had used before. She also began to discuss some of the problems relating to this "handicapped" label. She talked, for instance, about how people "look strange" at her and "talk loud" as if she were deaf.

Bonnie's ability to hold focussed conversations without missing out chunks of information also improved greatly. Her approved home proprietor stated that she "speaks articulately with graceful inflections. She is very gracious when dealing with other people and when the occasion demands." Janet agreed with these observations and added her own anecdote showing Bonnie's growing confidence. In June 1990, as we finished classes for the holidays, Bonnie had said to Janet: "If I feel lonely in the holidays, can I give you a call?" In June 1991, as we again finished classes for the holidays, Bonnie said: "Don't forget, if you feel lonely in the holidays you can just give me a call!"

Reports from Bonnie's approved home also suggest that her anxiety in regard to

literacy has decreased considerably. Bonnie is reading labels on food packages and recipes in cook books, suggesting that she may in fact be able to read more than she is willing or able to demonstrate in a testing situation. She is said to talk about reading and writing a great deal and spends much of her time writing or reading. Her sense of caring for the CHALLENGES program and especially for her tutor, Janet, are said to be evident in the fact that she never complains about any aspect of the program but is always very eager to attend. She dresses with care and always speaks very positively about her experiences in class. Although she has started a new job she enjoys, she was anxious to make sure it would not interfere with attendance at her literacy classes.

"If We Didn't Have This School..."

Bonnie's apprehension and extreme anxiety about learning to read and write were not emotions that we could easily change with a few caring words and lots of immersion in print. We can only begin to imagine how difficult it must be for someone who is a perfectionist about her art work and needlework, to let down her guard and be willing to be less than perfect in her reading and writing. Before Bonnie was willing to take any risks in an area that, as Janet stated, made her feel "bad", she needed to establish a trusting relationship with her tutor and with others in the Learning Centre. Only then could she begin to take those first tentative steps in reading and writing.

*"If you feel
lonely in the
holidays, you
can just give
me a call."*

-Bonnie

Perhaps Bonnie's own words best sum up her growth as a result of her participation in the literacy program. One Spring morning, after a number of hints about a special picture she was making for us, Bonnie came in with a large, carefully coloured drawing of a rural scene. Underneath the picture, with Janet's assistance, she had written:

Thank you...

For helping and listening very good,

For making me feel happy when I walk through the door,

For making a book to learn and share with others,

For remembering me at birthdays and summertime,

For last year's picnic and certificate.

Everyone is friendly to talk to. If we didn't have this school, I would not have learned all the things I have.



The Bear

I remember when we went to Banff. All my family was in the tent. My brother saw a bear. Tom hid himself in the car because the bear was very close and it was more safer. Barry came out with my brother and Robin came out with Mom and Dad. I was scared and nervous. After the bear left, all the family came out and had lunch. When we were going home, we saw a deer.

written and illustrated by Bonnie

How It All Began

Space and Furniture.

The project started in November 1989, in a third-floor classroom of an elementary/ junior high school in the Edmonton inner-city area. Table 1 summarizes the chronology of the development of the project. The first five months were spent setting up the Learning Centre. We were able to beg or borrow much of the furniture we needed—desks, room dividers and bookshelves— although we spent considerable time hammering some of it back together and painting most of it, in order to create a pleasant working environment. We purchased a few items such as tables for tutoring, as well as a computer, a printer, and all office supplies. Books and other resources were purchased and catalogued during this period, and we were able to set up a fairly good core library, largely suitable for students at the earlier reading levels.

Students and Tutors

A major task was the development of assessment tools, and the subsequent assessment of students, which continued from January until June 1990. Concurrently, I contacted students' support systems. These included parents, public guardians, approved home proprietors, social workers, employment support workers and outreach workers.

Another important task was the recruitment and training of the first group of tutors. I also researched articles pertaining to the project and visited other literacy programs in the Edmonton area. An advisory committee comprising representatives from organizations which serve adults who are developmentally disabled was set up, and held its first meeting in February 1990.

As with all new projects this was a somewhat frantic period. There were so many things to orchestrate and we felt that we were still a long way from getting to the heart of the project: the actual tutoring sessions. Nevertheless, everything gradually began to come together.

Tutoring Begins

We decided to start in a small way to be able to iron out any potential problems before taking the full complement of 20 student/tutor pairs. In March 1990 we started classes with five pairs who met in the Learning Centre twice a week for two-hour sessions until the end of June. The pairs settled down well and the tutoring sessions proceeded with few difficulties.

However, during this period we experienced a number of problems with our location. The third floor classroom caused problems with the Disabled Adult

The first five months were spent setting up the Learning Centre.

Searching for more suitable space was probably the low point of the entire project.

Transportation System (DATS) arrival and departure (three of the five students travelled by DATS). It also created entry difficulties for students who were not physically well-coordinated. Washrooms were inaccessibly located in the basement, the building was difficult to enter during non-school hours because of security measures, and students and tutors disliked travelling to classes by bus because of problems with drugs and prostitution in the immediate vicinity of the school. Some members of our advisory committee also expressed concern that the program was housed in an elementary school. They felt that adults, and particularly this group of often-marginalized adults, should be taking classes in an adult environment. Thus, after a few weeks, we began to look for new premises.

week of October. With two further training workshops, we reached our full complement of 20 students and tutors by mid-November. One year after it began, the CHALLENGES project was in full swing.

A Change in Location

Searching for more suitable space was probably the low point of the entire project. We were limited by the funding available for rent and the whole process consumed much more time than we could afford. We also received verbal agreements on a couple of possibilities only to be let down at the last minute. Eventually, we found space in a small office building in a central downtown location, and we moved there in early July 1990. The space consisted of a small office and a somewhat larger area for the Learning Centre. We were able to squeeze five tutoring spaces and a library area into the room, and a listening centre at the end of a short hallway. It was a little cramped but fairly workable. The adjectives "cosy" and "friendly" were most often used to describe it!

Although publicity to recruit tutors had been on-going since the spring, we began intensive tutor recruitment in mid-August, held tutor training workshops during the last week in September and began tutoring with 16 pairs in the first

1989	
November	Coordinator hired Project initiated in school building
1990	
January	Part-time assistant hired Student assessments and contacts with support systems began Tutors recruited
February	Advisory committee met for first time First tutor training workshops
March	Phase 1 classes began with five students Student assessments continued until June Tutor recruitment continued
July	Moved to new premises
August	Intensive recruitment of tutors Learning Centre schedules established: day-time, evening and Saturday morning sessions
September	Tutor training workshops Phase II classes began
October	Two sets of tutor training workshops Presentation at "Launching the 90's" literacy conference Full complement of twenty students being tutored
December	Refresher workshop for tutors
1991	
January	Tutor training workshops to replace non-continuing tutors
February	Informal sharing session for tutors Write-up of project began
March	Refresher workshop for stage one and two tutors
April	Advanced Education funding secured to continue CHALLENGES work
June	Tutoring phase ended Moved to new premises with PROSPECTS Write-up of project continued through July and August
September	Workshops about CHALLENGES project within Alberta Literacy Regions
October	CHALLENGES continues as a literacy program within the PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association

Table 1: When things happened

The Students

Where did they come from?

The recruitment of students was the easiest task of the CHALLENGES Literacy Project. Rather than our having to search them out, most found us with little difficulty. The majority of students were referred by agencies which had supported the project: PROSPECTS, Grant MacEwan Community College, Catholic Social Services, On Campus, YMCA and SKILLS. A few individuals heard about the project and referred themselves or were referred by their families. We very quickly had our full quota of 20 students, as well as a waiting list of 20 more who had virtually no chance of being admitted because of lack of space.

We established as few criteria as possible for acceptance of students.

As can be seen from Table 2, twelve of the CHALLENGES students were women and eight were men. Their ages ranged from 20 years to 47 years and three of them spoke English as a second language. They varied in their degree of independent living and in the extent to which they had been able to obtain further education. Only four of the students held full-time jobs; a further eight had part-time work, although some jobs were temporary.

How were they accepted?

Because this was a demonstration project we established as few criteria

as possible for acceptance of students. We were unable to accept most physically disabled students because of lack of suitable access. However we included three or four students with lesser physical disabilities, such as low vision and hearing difficulties. We did not place any limits in terms of perceived levels of ability or levels of intellectual functioning. In fact, for the most part we did not have I.Q. scores or results of any psychological testing for the students.

We accepted students on a "first come first served" basis as they were referred by other agencies. Some screening may have been done by these agencies, and they may, indeed, have referred only the students that they felt could benefit from literacy tutoring. But our final group encompassed a broad range of ability levels, including a couple of students who had fairly severe communication difficulties.

How were they assessed?

Before any students were accepted into the project, I worked with each for an average of two hours. The objective was first to find out as much as possible about the students themselves: their interests and hobbies, their past experiences with and concepts of reading and writing. I wanted also to see what strategies they used to process print, and

to obtain an approximate reading and writing level.

In order to set students at ease, an assessment usually began with small talk on topics ranging from bus travel to family members to work experiences. Then we moved to the completion of a questionnaire where students wrote their name, address and, if possible, other demographic information. If ability with this task was low, I assessed ability to recognize familiar everyday print from the environment, using a full picture context, then partial context and finally isolated words only (Malicky and Norman, 1989).

If reading ability appeared to be fairly good on the questionnaire, we moved into the reading of graded word lists and passages (Bader, 1983). I attempted always to obtain a listening comprehension score (Bader, 1983) in order to obtain some sense of reading potential. Two or three students had difficulty with this task however; they seemed very unsure about what was required of them.

If students were unable to read graded word lists and passages, I checked their ability to read the familiar language of nursery rhymes and songs like "Happy Birthday" (Malicky and Norman, 1989). We also usually engaged in a language experience activity in which students dictated a story or experience while I wrote it down. I then read the story back to them, we read it together a number of times, and they read it on their own. Also, I observed their general book-handling knowledge and, if it seemed warranted, asked specific questions about the directionality of print, and their concepts of a word and a letter (Clay, 1979). I always tried to get a writing sample, though many students found it difficult to write anything other than their names. If it seemed appropriate, I checked their knowledge of the alphabet

Age range:

20 yrs - 47 yrs

20-29	10
30-39	7
40-49	3

Women: 12

Men: 8

English as
Second Language: 3 of 20

Residence:

With family	12
Own apt/house	4
Approved home	4

Education:

Special Schools	9
Special Programs in regular schools	9
Regular Schools	2

Further Education/Training:

University (On Campus)/ GMCC program	3/5
Upgrading A.V.C.	2
Tutoring	2
Y.M.C.A./Skills	8
W.I.R.T.C.	11
Sheltered workshop	5

Employment:

Full-time	4
Part-time	8
Student	3
Volunteer work	3
Unemployed	6

Table 2: Student Profiles

Of the twenty students who participated, twelve were at the Stage One level of development.

and their ability to write the letters.

Finally, I tried to get some sense of their concepts of reading and writing: their ideas about literacy as primarily meaning-focussed or print-focussed. This was done by asking questions about a series of photographs where people were engaged in a variety of reading and writing activities, and by asking them to reflect, through another series of questions on their own literacy strategies (Fagan, 1988).

What were their ability levels?

In the past few years, literacy workers in Alberta have found it helpful to think of adult literacy development in terms of three stages (Chall, 1987; Jones, 1981; Malicky, 1989). Malicky's (1989) description of stages was used to characterize the ability levels of students in the CHALLENGES project. Of the twenty students who participated, twelve were at the Stage One level of development: they were unable to read and understand passages at a pre-primer level and could write very little. Five students were at a Stage Two level of development: they read at approximately a grade one to grade three level and were able to write independently, though often reluctantly; four of these students were print-based readers, while the fifth was more knowledge-based. The remaining three students were Stage Three learners: they were able to read at levels between grades four and nine and could write with reasonable fluency. For each of these students, word recognition was better developed than comprehension strategies.

Why did they wish to join?

The reasons given by applicants for wishing to participate in the project varied. Many had very practical goals such as to increase employment opportunities, or to learn how to shop, to cook, to do banking or travel by bus. At

least one student expressed a genuine "love of learning". A few were not sure why they wished to participate, but had been encouraged to do so by family, friends or social workers.

All of them appeared to have a sense that literacy is important, and the majority attended classes with enthusiasm and commitment. In one or two instances, students did not receive enough support from home to enable them to attend regularly. We found this especially frustrating since the students themselves were motivated to learn. However, most families or support workers saw these classes as very important. They went out of their way to ensure that the students had transportation to classes or that they could get time off work, if necessary, in order to be able to attend.

How were they matched?

The matching of students with tutors was dependent on many of the usual factors that coordinators must consider. A primary factor was the times at which student and tutor were available to meet. Generally, there was less flexibility in matching students who were available only in the day-time, since more tutors were available in the evenings or on weekends. Other "matching factors" included a wish for a male or female tutor, or an older or younger person. The students' level of ability also came into play, since tutors sometimes preferred beginning or more advanced students.

As much as possible, I also tried to take personalities into account. An extremely anxious student needed a gentle, non-threatening tutor; a student lacking in self-esteem needed a patient, encouraging tutor; a student with defensive, rather hostile behaviour needed a tutor who was tolerant but firm, with a sense of humour. The majority of the matches worked well with only two changes because of personality conflicts.

Three students were also re-matched with second tutors when their first tutors could not continue for reasons noted in the section on tutors. And three students were matched with two tutors each to provide them with extra tutoring time. These changes in matches worked very well, with students generally adapting well to such adjustments.

Staying the course

Of the twenty students who started in the project, seventeen stayed until its completion in June 1991. The reasons some dropped out are worth recording. One young man who was accepted on a trial basis because of his severe communication difficulties was unable to continue in the second phase because of lack of a suitable tutor. A second student who had previously attended group classes at Grant MacEwan Community College did not respond well to one-on-one tutoring. It seemed that much of his learning took place through observing

and participating in a group, and he found the tutorial situation threatening. Thus he returned to the Grant MacEwan program after 3 months. A third student proved to be unmotivated, and her tutor obtained so little satisfaction in working with her that she resigned after a three month period. No other suitable tutor was found for this student.

Of the seventeen students who stayed with the project, two had fairly erratic attendance and their tutors were discouraged because this affected the consistency of the students' progress. One other student, who had two tutors over the course of the project, proved to be difficult and relatively unrewarding to work with, although she did make some progress. The remaining fourteen students attended regularly, participated successfully and showed good progress — many of them, even, phenomenal progress.

	May 9 1991 School I go to night school on Thursday night. I take the Bus to School after work. I come to School with other students. I am happy when we have talk, I like to read and write with my teacher Margaret. She is a fun teacher to have. I bring muffins from home to have with coffee we take about my homework at 9:00 then I take the Bus home
--	--

Heather's story about classes

Finding Tutors and Keeping Them

How and when were they recruited?

The recruitment of tutors was perhaps the single most important task if the CHALLENGES Literacy Project was to be successful. Indeed, the project was set up precisely because other adult literacy programs had experienced difficulty in recruiting tutors to work with learners who are labelled developmentally disabled. The first small group of tutors was recruited by word of mouth, largely through the PROSPECTS program. More intensive recruitment began as soon as the first group of student/tutor pairs was established in March 1990. We continued these recruitment efforts over the next seven months, achieving our goal of 20 tutors by November 1990.

Where were they found?

The most effective means of finding tutors was through newspaper articles about the project. Over one third of the 26 tutors who eventually volunteered were recruited through three articles in local newspapers. Word of mouth, including referrals from the PROSPECTS program, was responsible for recruitment of almost a further third, while the Volunteer Action Centre and posters at the University of Alberta were the other two most productive recruitment sources. Other sources

tapped, but with little response, were church bulletins, convents, seniors centres, a newsletter for retired teachers, shopping centre posters, and university adult literacy courses.

Hindsight suggests that we might have targeted more specific areas of the university community such as the Special Education Students Association or the Department of Educational Psychology. Also, while we received little response from the one adult literacy course I was able to visit, there may be potential for future recruitment in the larger courses. It may also be possible to work out an arrangement with the Faculty of Education so that students can obtain credit within their courses for volunteer work in literacy projects such as CHALLENGES.

In all, 55 people responded to recruitment efforts. Of these, 37 were interviewed and 26 became tutors. There was some attrition at each stage of the recruitment process from initial phone call to interview to workshop attendance. Also, five tutors dropped out after they had fulfilled the initial three-month commitment (one pregnancy, three changes in work/college schedules, and one lack of satisfaction with the work).

The most effective means of finding tutors was through newspaper articles about the project.

Who were the tutors?

A summary of information about the tutors is provided in Table 3. There was no standard profile for the tutors in the project just as there was no standard profile for the students. Their ages ranged from one teenager to two people in their fifties. Interestingly, no seniors became involved even though we approached several seniors' residences, a fact that perhaps gives credence to the words of one residence caretaker: "It's a myth that seniors are all looking for something to do; most of them have plenty to do already."

Twenty of the tutors in the project, or 77%, were female and six, or 23%, were male. This was a somewhat higher involvement by male tutors than the average 12% in most literacy programs in the province (Report on the Alberta Literacy Inventory, 1990). At least 80% of the CHALLENGES tutors had some post-secondary education with almost half already holding university degrees, and several others in the process of attaining them. In examining the files of potential tutors who dropped out either before completing tutor training, or after tutoring for a short time, it seems that most had a grade twelve education or less.

The most surprising statistic was the number of tutors who volunteered their time while already working substantial hours. Approximately 70% of tutors worked full-time or were full-time students. One tutor was a full-time student, held two part-time jobs and still fulfilled his twice-a-week tutoring commitment with great reliability. Another tutor worked full-time, was taking correspondence courses towards a degree, and also came faithfully to all tutoring sessions. Of those who were unemployed, all would have continued tutoring if they had obtained employment, although they may have had

to alter their tutoring schedules.

Of the five tutors who were homemakers, only one had children who were below school age. This tutor had to arrange babysitters for her young children while tutoring, a task that added to her responsibilities. Our experience suggests that considerable potential exists for obtaining tutors from among young parents if some form of child-care exists at the Learning Centre, or if we could pay for at-home babysitting expenses.

Tutor Training

An initial screening interview at which potential tutors also received orientation to the project provided the first step in the training process. The Journeyworkers program (Norton, 1988) then formed the basis of the workshops, as it does for over 80% of other tutor training workshops in the province (Report on the Alberta Literacy Inventory, 1990). It was most important that the new tutors should have a good understanding of the concept of literacy and the processes of reading and writing. So these topics, along with suggestions for teaching strategies, made up a large part of the training workshops.

In addition, a consultant from Alberta Family and Social Services came to talk about developmental disabilities. This former teacher of disabled adults provided both professional and personal viewpoints of her relationships with people labelled disabled. Most importantly, she provided a great deal of reassurance about teaching and learning with this group of adults; she encouraged the tutors to look beyond labels and to see their students as people first, with all of the qualities found in people in any other segment of the population.

At later workshops, new tutors also found it very useful to hear the perspective of tutors already active in the project. When the latter told how apparent

"It's a myth that seniors are all looking for something to do; most of them have plenty to do already."

She encouraged tutors to look beyond labels.

New tutors gained inspiration and confidence.

"memory problems" faded when a student developed confidence in her abilities, or how focussing on strengths led to improved self-esteem which in turn led to growth in literacy, new tutors gained inspiration and confidence. The stories further reinforced the message that, as tutors, they could make a difference in the literacy development of individuals who have been labelled in ways that imply literacy is not possible for them.

I also invited students to visit the tutor workshops but was not able to find an individual who was willing to come. However, one student participated in a panel discussion of the project at the "Launching the 90's" Literacy Conference, and this was most successful (see page 18). With encouragement and preparation more students might be encouraged to tell their own stories at workshops and so help break down the myths, fears and stereotypes that new tutors may have. Videos and films can also be used for a similar purpose (some titles are included in the bibliography in appendix A).

The degree of support varied according to the individual expectations and requests of the tutors.

My broad goal in tutor training was to impart to the tutors a belief in the students as learners. At the same time I wanted to help them be realistic in their expectations of their students, and recognize that it often takes more than a few weeks of positive learning experiences to overcome years of failure. Waiting for progress is often very difficult for tutors, and they need ongoing support and reassurance that, indeed, progress will happen.

Tutor Support

Day to day: One of the advantages of this project, given the fact that most tutoring took place in the Learning Centre, was that further help and guidance could be given informally and on an individual basis as tutoring progressed. The degree of support varied

according to the individual expectations and requests of the tutors. I attempted to be available and open to discussion at all times, without intruding unnecessarily on the student/tutor relationship. Most tutors seemed to find this arrangement agreeable; some tutors talked with me regularly and asked questions almost every session, while others rarely discussed their program with me except when I asked for a written evaluation of progress.

In a couple of instances it became apparent that tutors expected more hands-on guidance. One tutor felt that he needed more "supervised practical applications"; another compared our project with a program where the supervisor sat in on the tutoring sessions. After both of these comments I offered to sit in, demonstrate a strategy, provide an audience or serve in any other type of advisory function but this type of involvement was never requested. However, the need for particular kinds of support for particular tutors must be recognized, and provided when possible.

We were able to provide a more concrete level of support through a convenient library service (with on-the-spot suggestions about materials), a ready supply of tutoring materials, and services such as photo-copying, and typing of student work. I regularly shared literacy articles and strategies with tutors via a mailbox system. These were generally appropriate to the stages of the students' learning and to my perception of their interests and needs. We also used memos both to provide information and to request feedback for the project. But, in general, the weekly face-to-face contact enabled tutors to obtain as much support as they felt necessary at any given time.

Sharing sessions: We also held a couple of sharing sessions for tutors during the course of the project. These provided an opportunity for tutors to

discuss concerns and to provide both practical and moral support to each other. It also gave me the chance to suggest new strategies, answer questions about strategies in use, or give feedback and recognition for the work being done. This type of mutual support group would be valuable in any literacy program since tutors have much to offer each other from their own experience.

Additional Workshops: A workshop on the L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E program presented by its developer, Dr. Bill Fagan, was given in December 1990. This provided an opportunity to reflect on tutoring practices and to reinforce some of the concepts presented at the initial tutor training workshops. Because of the very thorough and systematic nature of the program, it also provided new ideas and concepts, and it exposed tutors to a number of new strategies to try. At the request of a couple of tutors, I also gave a review workshop for Stage One and Stage Two learners in April, 1991. All extra workshops were well attended, suggesting that tutors appreciated the opportunity to further develop their tutoring skills.

Slaying the course

In comparing our tutor recruitment efforts with those of other literacy programs such as PROSPECTS, we perhaps experienced a slightly higher attrition rate between the time of initial response to advertising and the start of tutoring. In other words, greater recruitment efforts were needed to attract the same number of tutors. Generally, however, while tutor recruitment took longer than expected, necessitating five tutor training workshops over a one year period, the project was very successful in attracting a committed and competent group of tutors, the majority of whom stayed with the project until its completion.

More than 50% of the tutors have also made a commitment to continue tutoring in the CHALLENGES program in the fall of 1991. Thus the statistics of tutor tenure in this project compare favourably with those of most literacy programs in the province where 21% of tutors remain with programs for 7-12 months, and 55% of tutors remain for 1-3 years (Report on the Alberta Literacy Inventory, 1990).

Undoubtedly, some of the success in retaining tutors can be attributed to the

Age Range:

16-19	1
20-29	8
30-39	8
40-49	7
50-59	2

Women:	20
Men:	6

Education:

University Degree	12
Degree in process	5
Other Post Secondary	4
Grade Twelve	5

Employment:

Homemaker/Retired	5
Part-time work	3
Full-time work	8
Self-employed	1
Student	6
Unemployed	3

Teaching Experience:

Formal/Classroom	8
Informal/Family	18

The project was very successful in attracting a committed and competent group of tutors, the majority of whom stayed with the project until its completion.

Table 3: Tutor Profiles

fact that this *was* a demonstration project with a definite finishing date. However, comments from tutors themselves also indicate that their continuing commitment to tutoring was due in large part to the good tutoring environment available in our Learning Centre, and to the support they received from project staff and other tutors.

The Conference

I liked the conference. I liked to speak at the conference to all the people. I told them how I learn how to make tapes to listen to my voice and Jackie's voice reading together. I told them to look at my words and tapes. People ask questions about why I like Challenges. I like to learn how to read. People listen when we talk. I like to play word bingo and to get to know people quite well. I take a bus to Challenges by myself. I want to learn how to read to organise the words in the book. That's important. I tell people I work at home. I practise words and reading at home and listen to tapes.

by Lori.

Lori's language experience story about speaking at the literacy conference

The Tutoring Program - How It Worked

Our Beliefs About Learning and Literacy

Because of the labelling of students in the CHALLENGES Literacy Project as disabled or handicapped it was very important that we began with the basic belief that these adult students could and would learn, regardless of their level of ability, and despite the failures they had had in the past. We knew that learning was most likely to occur if we could create an environment in which the students were willing to take risks with text. We also knew that this environment benefitted from these five factors:

1. **We saw tutors and students as partners in learning.** This partnership was based on mutual respect and understanding. For example, most tutors encouraged active involvement of students in choosing materials, planning tutorials, and making decisions about new strategies or information to be learned. This was sometimes difficult because students were often quite dependent and expected their tutors to be responsible for all aspects of the program. They needed lots of encouragement to take responsibility for their own learning.
2. **We believed that there was no set curriculum, no set of teaching techniques or strategies that would work for all learners.** We knew that we must be willing to try things that we knew had worked with others, but we also had to be willing to allow students the freedom to reject particular ideas and techniques.
3. **Our beliefs about literacy included, most importantly, the idea that reading and writing are meaning-centred processes.** This meant that students would be most successful if they could build on their own experiences, interests and strengths, and on the knowledge they already had about print.
4. **We believed that as much as possible we should work from wholes to parts.** We avoided teaching isolated letters and words out of context. We followed the principles of immersion at the very early stages; in so doing, we exposed students to as much meaningful print as possible. We helped them to feel like readers and writers by providing support

through techniques such as language experience writing, and assisted and paired reading. As learners developed sight vocabularies, we gradually introduced strategies to help them with decoding difficulties and helped them expand their reading to include a variety of forms and genres. We also encouraged independent writing, with the focus largely on content rather than correctness. Later, we focussed on a variety of comprehension strategies and on writing for a variety of purposes.

5. **We also believed we must keep our teaching as concrete as possible.** Whenever we could teach by doing or showing, rather than by telling, the students learned more easily and retained knowledge more effectively. Concrete, hands-on learning ranged from games playing for development of phonic skills, to drama activities for developing knowledge of story structure, to visits to local stores in order to acquire money-handling skills.

Which Strategies Were Most Effective?

The following text describes strategies and techniques used in the three stages of literacy development. Profiles of student/tutor pairs at each of the stages bring to life the exciting results the strategies often produced.

The text is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to all possible tutoring techniques nor even a guide to all that were used in this project. However, it provides a sense of the range of possibilities and of the techniques that worked best for the students and tutors in this program. Coordinators and tutors can refer to sources such as

Journeyworkers (Norton, 1988) and *L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E* (Fagan, 1990) for more detailed descriptions of teaching strategies.

Skating

When I was a little kid I fell over on the ice. The ice was by the wheat field I made the ice with dirty water from the kitchen sink. When I went ice skating on another ice rink, I held on to the boards. I stayed up one hour, then I went down again, but I was okay.

by Norman

Our Farm

When I was a kid I drove a little tractor. I was hauling the hay for the cow. I planted potatoes too. You use your own hands to put the potato hole in the soil. We grew cabbage, carrots and round turnips. Sometimes we picked up rhubarb and made rhubarb pie. It was sour, not enough sugar. My dad had diabetes so he couldn't have sugar, but diet sugar was okay. We put our potatoes, turnips and parsnips in the root cellar.

by Norman

Two of Norman's first stories.

Stage One

Twelve of the 20 students in the CHALLENGES project were Stage One learners; nine of the twelve were at beginning levels. They were unable to obtain instructional level scores on graded word lists in an informal reading inventory, or to identify many common words from everyday experience out of context. The remaining three students could recognize words at a pre-primer level but were unable to demonstrate understanding of what they read.

All Stage One students were able to write their own names. Some could write a few other words, although most were reluctant to write. Their knowledge of the alphabet ranged from very little to almost complete; one or two students could write most of the letters from memory. Here are the main teaching strategies we used:

Language Experience

The most successful strategy at this level, for all students, was the use of language experience writing, where students dictated their ideas to their tutors and then learned to read these stories, first with assistance and then alone. A number of students showed remarkable progress in terms of their ability to relate stories. Once they acquired the knack of telling about their experiences, once they seemed to realize, in fact, that their experiences were worth writing about, a flood of stories was forthcoming.

One tutor, Nicky, commented that she suddenly had difficulty keeping up with Norman, her somewhat reticent student, as he fluently told about his experiences growing up on a farm some 40 years previously (see example at left). Student Dwayne, was thrilled to write about his country of birth, and with tutor Lou's

help he elaborated his first brief sentence into a well organized, comprehensive description of his much-loved homeland. Student Roseann often chose to write about her daily activities and significant events in her life. She wrote also about past experiences where people had made fun of her because she couldn't read. Another very quiet student, Elsie, showed great potential as a story-teller. Her oral language was well-developed and she enjoyed writing about her daily experiences. She also took stories home to practice reading them, and then on several occasions returned the following week wanting to revise parts she "didn't like that well". It should be noted that several students at this level had difficulty keeping their place as they read. Alan, for example, zig-zagged back and forth between two or three lines of print at times. For some students, finger pointing worked well, while Alan and others preferred to use a line guide.

—and related activities

Sentence scramble: A number of Spairs used the language experience stories to move into other activities where students gained further exposure to their new sight vocabulary. One student enjoyed writing some of her stories onto several cards which she could then match with the original, an activity at which she became adept. This type of sentence scramble activity was done by several other Stage One learners who seemed to enjoy the puzzle-like nature of the task. Tutor Denise commented that Alan "always recognized the words" when doing this activity with his own stories and that he felt a sense of accomplishment when he was able to complete the sentences accurately. A couple of students preferred working with frame sentences where one or two sentences were taken from their stories and new words were found to complete the sentences. One tutor commented that this work seemed very repetitive and

The most successful strategy at this level, for all students, was the use of language experience writing.

somewhat trivial, yet her student enjoyed the activity and never seemed to tire of using the same frame over and over again. The importance of student choice is thus worth continually emphasizing to tutors, as is the importance of much repetition and the use of predictable text at this learning stage.

Related reading material: Many tutors also tried to find other stories on topics similar to the students' stories. Don found stories written by other literacy students in *Northern Storytellers* and used these to stimulate his student Roseann's memories of her growing-up years in the North. Tutor Jacqueline used newspaper articles about fishing to complement Norman's own fishing stories, while student Elsie's first visit to a public library with her tutor Patti revealed the student's love of animals and thus her interest in reading material about animals. Student Alan and his tutor Denise used newspaper articles to build on Alan's interests in local sports teams. For Alan, also, the use of the T.V. guide served as a bridge between his interest in soap opera stars and in the Oilers hockey team. Alan also needed to develop more accurate concepts of time since Denise noticed that he used words such as "yesterday" and "today" when talking about coming events. So she used the calendar, the T.V. guide and the Oilers' hockey schedule to concretize these abstract concepts and help Alan keep track of coming events. She was delighted when, after a few weeks of this work, Alan said "See you next week Denise," and then showed her the precise date on his calendar.

Taping student stories: Several students read their stories into a tape-recorder with help from their tutors. This enabled them to practice reading their stories at home, without having to rely on others for assistance. This is a concern for many students who may not have sufficient support in the

development of literacy skills from others in their lives, or who may simply choose to work independently at home. One student, Lori, taped everything she wrote at first, carried the tape with her everywhere, and read along with it often. This became the main strategy for overcoming the "memory problem" that her tutor was concerned about when she first worked with her. Through the process Lori did learn to read many of her stories and began to recognize many words by sight.

Overcoming Difficulties

Some students, whose oral language skills were not well developed, initially found it a little difficult to dictate their ideas to their tutors. So at first, their tutors had to help them develop one-word or two-word ideas. Student Jim, for instance, who had hearing and speech impairments, often spoke in incomplete sentences. He would say "play hockey", or "going Calgary", and his tutor Fred, helped him elaborate these ideas somewhat. For students like Heather, whose oral and written language was sometimes incomplete in terms of missing words or containing incorrect verb endings, the idea of contributing a piece of writing to a student anthology enabled her tutor, Margaret, to encourage her to revise a couple of pieces of writing that were lacking coherence. When she saw a real purpose for revision, Heather was more prepared to spend time looking for and correcting errors.

Although student Alan also found it difficult to dictate well developed language experience stories, his tutor Denise capitalized on his interest in an actor from a soap opera he watched every day, by having him write a letter to the actor. Alan was delighted with the letter he composed and he mailed it with great anticipation. Unfortunately, he did not receive a reply, so this correspondence went no further. However, Alan did go on

The importance of student choice is thus worth continually emphasizing to tutors, as is the importance of much repetition and the use of predictable text at this learning stage.

to write a letter to his sister in Europe, and he received a reply to this letter.

Alan received speech therapy for some weeks during the tutoring phase, and Denise noticed a definite improvement in his language during this time. Conversely, Alan's parents felt that since coming to literacy classes his speech was much clearer and he was speaking in more complete sentences. Similarly, several parents and support persons told us that their students' speech had improved "both in clarity and in range of vocabulary", or that the students were more prepared to make phone calls and to speak for longer on the phone.

In general, as students were given frequent opportunities to express their ideas, most began to dictate more complete sentences and they required less prompting and structure from tutors.

Photo-Stories

Taking language experience a step further, four or five students enjoyed making photo-stories about their jobs or volunteer work. Most of these were done quite informally with little prior planning in terms of the actual writing. Tutor and student simply went out together during regular class time and took a variety of photos related to the student's work. Once the pictures were developed, they chose a number of them to place in a small photo album and then developed text to accompany the pictures. The students who wrote these stories were very proud of them and learned to read them accurately and fluently.

Sight Words

The building of a basic sight word vocabulary by recording known words on individual cards was also a successful strategy with most Stage One students. Whether words were chosen from their language experience stories or from other sources such as flyers or magazines,

many students enjoyed creating a bank of words that they could recognize on sight. Several students, including Lori, clearly stated a sense of achievement as their pack of word cards grew and they could visibly see the progress they were making. Lori enjoyed making a scrapbook of grocery products and labels which she then transferred to sight word cards. With both her tutors, Jacqueline and Lauraine, she focussed on functional, practical words related to household items and activities.

The use of coloured pens to visually mark out known words was also successful for a few students. For those who did use word cards, this strategy petered out naturally as they began to be able to read easy books and to increase their sight vocabularies, or as other activities took precedence. However, the strategy was invaluable at these beginning levels to build confidence. It showed students that they *could* learn, that they *were* learning. Many of them needed to be convinced of this after years of failure.

Assisted Reading

For most Stage One students, much of their reading was assisted, with the tutors reading along in choral form. Reading material was most often the students' own stories, although some students enjoyed listening to taped books and then reading along with the tape. One student had, we discovered, an almost phobic fear of books that prevented her borrowing any books from the Learning Centre library. Despite her assertion that she wanted to learn to read books, she preferred to read her own writing and became very anxious when her tutor suggested looking at books together.

Predicting activities were often done during tutor-assisted reading. Tutors found that by fading out in the reading when coming up to a very predictable word, students could be encouraged to

Several students, including Lori, clearly stated a sense of achievement as their pack of word cards grew and they could visibly see the progress they were making.

use their own world knowledge and language knowledge to make acceptable predictions. However, it should be noted that because some students in this group have delayed language development, they do not always predict in semantically or grammatically correct ways. Tutors found that they needed to be extra careful in the words they chose for prediction purposes, beginning with very highly predictable nouns and verbs and gradually including slightly more difficult words. Some tutors found that discussion of such things as past and present tenses of verbs often took place in the context of predicting, so that this strategy aided vocabulary development as well as reading development.

Writing

We tried to encourage all students to do some independent writing from the beginning, though many were apprehensive about doing so. Some students copied beautifully but did not know what they had written; others simply said they couldn't write. But with lots of encouragement most did begin to attempt words on their own. Lori, a student who was anxious about most literacy activities, only copied words for several months. Then one day, after Jacqueline had again encouraged her to write just the sounds she could hear in the words, Lori wrote "I went for ptsa", and then proudly showed it to everyone in the Learning Centre. She then began writing lists of numbers and colours from memory, and we heard, too, that she was writing grocery lists without copying from the product names. Similar progress was seen with other students. Once spelling was de-emphasized, students were willing to take risks and attempt to write on their own.

Math

Several students expressed an interest in doing math work and experienced success in a range of activities from basic

counting to counting in tens, to addition and subtraction. Others worked on telling time and on money skills such as making change and balancing a cheque book. When tutorials were held only once a week, new concepts were easily forgotten between sessions. Thus, as in most other areas, repetition was a key factor in helping students learn the material. Homework was also necessary to reinforce what had been taught in classes.

The use of manipulatives such as counters, rods, and coins was also very helpful. The more that tutors could keep math activities concrete, the more likely that students would experience success. The use of counters to do simple addition and subtraction gave Elsie an understanding of the concept of "number" that she had never really had before. For Alan, the keeping of a calendar on which he and his tutor Denise recorded his daily activities, was instrumental in providing him with a clearer sense of the concept of "day", "week" and "month" than he had had before. And tutor Fred's persistence with the plastic blocks in the *Base 10 Number Concept Set* helped Jim to gain a more concrete understanding of abstract numerical values.

Students also needed practice in applying their skills in a variety of situations in order to ensure that the knowledge was transferred to real situations. Our learning centre was not located close to a supermarket, so there was less "in context" teaching of these skills than there might have been. Undoubtedly, such skills as making change for the store, the bus, or coffee and snack machines are best practiced in real situations, but such "field trips" can only be left to the discretion and willingness of individual tutors and students.

"I went for
ptsa"

Stage One Mini-Case Louise, Joce and Sue

Louise, a fairly shy 25 year old student, was matched with two tutors, Joce and Sue, both of whom were able to tutor her once a week. When I first assessed Louise, her word recognition skills were close to the Stage Two level, but her comprehension lagged substantially. Unlike many of the students, however, she enjoyed writing and was willing to take risks in this area.

Both tutors took their lead from Louise in planning their classes with her. Louise loved children's books, and had recently taken a children's literature course in the On Campus University program. So stories and poems became the focus of Louise's program. Sue used nursery rhymes and poems extensively, often acting them out with Louise or chanting them with her. They also read stories and poems on particular themes and Louise then used the themes as the jumping off point for her own stories or poems. Sue used poetry to develop concepts and vocabulary, encouraging Louise to illustrate concepts with her own drawings which she would then describe in her own words.

With Joce, Louise did lots of writing. Given the freedom to write without too much emphasis on mechanics, Louise wrote prolifically on topics ranging from recipes to her interest in the T.V. series,

"Father Dowling Mysteries". Like Sue, Joce also used stories as a pattern for Louise to write her own books. Joce found that it was "very easy to discuss ideas with her that come from the base pattern". Joce found also that Louise loved to surprise her with her own version of the base pattern; once she had the idea she would write independently until she had completed her story or poem. Louise enjoyed playing word games such as scrabble, and she also liked to make up her own word puzzles and share them with others in the group. Perhaps more than any other student in the project, Louise enjoyed playing with language and this was probably why children's literature worked so well for her.

Both Sue and Joce commented a number of times during the tutoring period on Louise's ability to work in a very serious, concentrated way. She was rarely disturbed by noise from other people in the Learning Centre, and she adapted to each tutor's teaching style quite readily. At first, Louise was inconsistent in terms of bringing back homework or books she had taken to read, and she sometimes had difficulty getting to class on time.

However, with steady reminders about homework, she improved in this area and her time-keeping habits improved also. Sue suggested that routine was "the key".

As the tutoring continued, Louise's mom reported an increase in her reading at home. She was taking books along on their weekend visits to the lake, and was

*Someday
by Louise*

*Someday
I'm moving
downtown*

*Someday
I'm going to be
the best bowling
player*

*Someday
I'm going to go on
a trip*

*Someday
I'm going to be a
singer and actress*

*Someday
I'm going to
Hollywood
But right now....
It's coffee time*

*"It was very
easy to discuss
ideas that come
from the base
pattern with
her."*

-Joce

picking up newspapers to read more often. She was also doing more writing, such as writing grocery lists and keeping a daytimer. Her mom also reported a definite improvement in her verbal skills. As well, her level of self-confidence and assurance was said to have increased considerably; she was "regaining skills" that had been lost once her formal schooling had ended.

When I re-assessed Louise after a 9 month tutoring period, I was pleased, not only with her much improved comprehension score (now at a solid Stage Two level) but also with her sure sense of story structure and with her confidence in re-telling what she had read. Just as impressive as Louise's improved comprehension score was her enjoyment of her work. She took obvious pride in everything she did and was delighted to demonstrate some of the work she had been doing in her tutorials. Louise told me that she loved her classes and her tutors and that she was "doing

great". In these few words she summed up her own progress as adequately as any other evaluation method I had used.

*On a Snowy day, everything
is covered in Shaving Cream.*

by Louise

*Rain
by Louise*

The rain is coming down.

*The Blessings come down
instead of Colored rain.*

Stage Two

Five students were at the Stage Two level of learning. On reading tasks from an informal reading inventory, these students were able to read and understand material anywhere from a primer or grade one level up to about a grade three level. Four of the students were print-based readers. They focussed largely on the mechanical aspects of print (handwriting, spelling and punctuation) and tended to do better on word identification than on comprehension tasks. The other student was a more knowledge-based reader. She relied too heavily on her own background knowledge so that her understanding of material was often different from the author's intended meaning. The following strategies worked well with these students.

Predicting Activities

Almost all of the tutors worked on predicting activities at some point during their tutoring sessions. This would often begin as an oral activity; for example, "The Oilers will win the ___ : what word do you think fits there?" After a number of sentences done orally, tutors introduced similar sentences in written form, moving then to passages with a number of blanked-out words to be predicted. At this level, predicting was most often taught to develop word attack strategies, using context and first letter cues.

Cloze: Several tutors and students mentioned cloze as one of their favourite and most successful predicting activities. Student Heather and her tutor Margaret did cloze activities quite regularly and, as with the sentence scramble, enjoyed the puzzle-like nature of the task. Some students at the early levels used their own language experience stories for cloze activities, progressing to less well-known material

as they became more adept at predicting the deleted words. Cloze activities were also used by some tutors at the Stage Three level to encourage monitoring of words that were often left out in spoken language, such as prepositions and conjunctions.

Repetition: Several tutors expressed the need for lots of repetition of predicting activities within the context of real reading situations. Students would then begin to use the strategy consistently. Very often, they could "do" predicting when it was done as an activity, but did not carry the ability over into other reading situations. Once the initial strategy had been taught, tutors had to remind students many times about using the strategy to actually figure out unknown words in their reading of books, newspapers and magazines. One student actively resisted learning to predict, asking: "How should I know what it says? I haven't read it yet". But she tended to have the same reaction whenever the onus was put on her to be active in her own learning. Tutor John noted that Coletta simply had a difficult time keeping the whole context in mind as she attempted to predict an unknown word. She was able to attend only to the problem word, and when pressed to think about the context would sometimes lose track of the task at hand.

For most students at this level, however, the strategy was both useful and effective. For print-based readers it helped to move them away from an over-emphasis on print and encouraged them to use their own knowledge more consistently. Old habits can be quite hard to change though, and when re-assessing students I found that the stress of the situation sometimes caused them to lapse into their old ways of simply staring at the word and spelling it letter by letter. However, in the day-to-day tutoring situation, students did begin to use cueing systems more consistently. For

At this level, predicting was most often taught to develop word attack strategies, using context and first letter cues.

Coletta, a knowledge-based reader, predicting activities helped her attend more closely to the print in the "Does it check out?" phase of the activity. One student's "substitutions became less frequent and made sense more often than not"; another student with fairly severe decoding errors began to monitor more often saying "Oh no, that doesn't make sense".

Assisted Writing

A fair amount of overlap existed between Stage One and Stage Two students in language experience and assisted writing. One or two students at the Stage One level spontaneously wished to revise their dictated stories, while at least one student at the Stage Two level resisted anything other than first draft writing. For the most part though, when the students were working with their own experiences and interests, they showed a real desire to make sure their stories were as complete as they could make them, particularly if they wished to display them on the bulletin boards around the Learning Centre. The production of a small anthology of student writing towards the end of the project provided tutors with the opportunity to point out the need for coherence and correctness in some pieces of writing.

Journal Writing

A couple of Stage Two students used a journal writing to develop fluency and to decrease anxiety about the mechanics of writing. Lanis wrote extensively in a journal, making several entries a week at home. Her journal generally took the form of "what I did today" with comments on how she felt about events in her life. She often addressed her tutor, Barb, directly and this became a way of communicating with Barb rather than always phoning her to chat (a habit that became so prevalent that Barb had to place some restrictions

on the frequency and timing of calls). Lanis sometimes experimented with the mechanics of writing in her journal, at one time punctuating the end of every line with a period as she struggled with the concept of a sentence.

Dwayne, who moved into the Stage Two level during the course of the project was also encouraged by both of his tutors to write regularly at home. Initially he was very concerned about handwriting and getting things "right", but over a number of months he became much more relaxed and began to produce greater amounts of writing about his daily activities. As he expressed himself more in writing, he also began to talk more while he was in the Learning Centre. He was very shy and quiet for the first couple of months, but gradually started to express his opinion on various topics at coffee break and also to state some learning goals and personal goals. His was one of the more startling transformations as he changed from a person who sat passively and silently with his hands flat on his lap, to a person who laughed infectiously at his tutor's jokes, talked vivaciously about his wish to do science and volunteered information on favourite topics such as the solar system.

Taped Books

The use of taped books was successful with some of the students. There were some complaints that the tapes were either "too slow" or "too fast", but eventually, students adjusted to the pace and enjoyed taking these books out of the library. A couple of students never did take to it very readily, seeming to find it difficult to listen, eye-voice match, turn the page at the right time and find their place again if they got lost. They also liked to repeat the words orally after the reader, but since there was insufficient time to do this, they would soon lose their place. Another student liked to read only a few pages at a time and always found it

As he expressed himself more in writing, he also began to talk more while he was in the Learning Centre.

difficult to locate her starting point again.

One or two beginning readers also enjoyed using the taped books. With considerable help and guidance at first, they mastered the technicalities of coordinating book and tape-recorder, and began to eye-voice match more consistently. This technique gave them access to books which they may never have had before, and this undoubtedly contributed to that essential step of helping them to feel like readers.

However, as with most other techniques, the acceptance of this particular strategy was an individual decision. The success in using taped books depended more on a student's level of comfort with them, than on anyone else's notion that it would be useful for them.

Word analysis skills

A couple of students were held back from further development in their reading by their lack of ability to analyze and identify unknown words. Despite an increase in the volume of their reading over a number of months, they were being no more successful with decoding strategies. Tutor Sue worked on word analysis with Louise in the context of the poems they read over a number of weeks. Because they often read the poems orally, both together and individually, pronunciation was important, and Sue used this importance to encourage Louise to analyze syllables in new words. Louise responded well to this work and her ability in word analysis showed improvement in the year-end re-assessment. Student Lanis, on the other hand, was difficult to work with because she detested any kind of decoding work in context. Her eyes would glaze over and she would yawn ostentatiously and lose her focus on the work at hand whenever she could not immediately identify a word and had to attempt analysing it.

After discussions with Lanis' tutor, Barb,

we decided to introduce some word analysis as a set part of each tutorial, using the Glass-Analysis Kit. This met with some resistance at first from Lanis, who was often resistant to new ideas. However with some persistence on the part of her tutor and some encouragement from me, she gradually accepted the value of the technique and began to participate willingly. The fact that Barb encouraged Lanis to set her own schedule and include a range of activities each week also helped Lanis to accept this strategy, since she had control over when and for how long they would practise the technique. We were surprised, in fact, at the degree of perseverance that Lanis eventually showed when doing this work. She became much less defensive and hostile about taking time to analyze the words into parts, and her level of frustration when she could not immediately identify a word decreased substantially. After 8 months of tutoring, her abilities in word recognition had improved a full grade level and showed signs of developing at an even greater rate.

Other Strategies

Two strategies that were suggested but not used very much were paired reading (Morgan, 1986; Scoble, Topping & Wigglesworth, 1988) and cued spelling (Scoble, 1988). Generally, tutors were unable to do paired reading in any systematic way since it requires a daily time commitment and tutors met with students no more than twice a week. Paired reading was offered to parents and other support persons as one technique that could be used at home to provide practical help and encouragement. However, we received no feedback that any paired reading took place at home. There is good potential for this technique, but it requires a more thorough training program for interested pairs. Paired reading would be an excellent strategy to use during a long summer break when

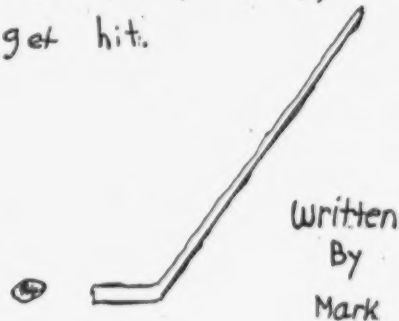
However with some persistence on the part of her tutor and some encouragement from me, she gradually accepted the value of the technique and began to participate willingly.

tutoring may be suspended or may be less regular than usual.

A couple of tutor/student pairs used the cued spelling technique but found it too difficult for the students to learn. The number of steps involved made it hard for the student to keep track, and students also found it almost impossible to come up with their own mnemonic strategies. Simpler strategies such as using spelling patterns or word-sorts seemed to work better for these students.

BILL IN THE RINK

Bill our hero is playing at Northlands.
Bill sees lots of people in the
Stands. Bill is happy because there
are lots of people. Bill Sees the
Score board. The score is 6 to 2.
Bill sees the ice cleaner. Bill
has to get out of the way, or
else he will get hit.



Mark and Mark Stage Two Mini-Case

Mark and Mark, our "dynamic duo" as we came to call them, worked together for about eight months. Mark F. (tutor) was substitute teaching throughout this time and Mark W. (student) was, doing part-time volunteer work at the Y.M.C.A. Mark W., aged 20, was the youngest of our students, having left school the previous summer. He was a very lively, sociable young man who was assessed as a Stage Two learner, with his word recognition abilities more or less level with his abilities in comprehension. His writing, however, was still at a Stage One level; he was reluctant to write and was very concerned with spelling and mechanics whenever he wrote anything.

Mark F. was quietly firm in his tutoring approach with the rambunctious Mark W., but he was also easy-going, with a sense of humour that enabled him to quickly build a warm relationship with his student. He was also accommodating in his approach, making arrangements to meet at alternative times when Mark W. became involved in practices for Special Olympics, giving him rides home often, and inviting him to help build a set of shelves for the Learning Centre. This latter activity became a great source of pride to Mark W. since he was involved in every step of the job, from measuring wood to using an electric drill for the first time.

The two Marks worked on a range of strategies and with a variety of materials during their sessions. Mark F. made a conscious effort to de-emphasize the mechanics of writing and to encourage journal writing to build fluency. He "used it to communicate exciting events in his life" and it "served to increase the quantity of writing". Mark W. became less apprehensive about writing and was gradually able to get his ideas down on paper much faster. The duo also used

assisted writing strategies to help Mark W. organize his ideas more effectively.

Mark W. enjoyed adventure stories and he read a number of books in the Jim Hunter series, many of which we had on tape. He later decided to try his hand at an adventure story himself, one of the few students in the project to attempt fiction writing. He enjoyed writing about fictional characters and talking about what they liked and what they did. As his tutor commented: "It gave him a lot of control and the ability to change predictions." It was perhaps the longest piece of writing he'd done, and he took great care with it, revising and editing until he was happy with what he had written. He also wrote several comprehension questions to accompany the story. This became his contribution to the student anthology.

One of the most successful sources of reading material for this pair was the newspaper. Mark F. felt that the picture content "promotes prediction as well as creating a context". He also liked the options it gave in terms of "type and complexity of the articles." Mark W. particularly liked the sports section since he was quite athletic himself and he also enjoyed following a number of sports teams. However, he was sometimes interested in other news. Since most of the articles followed the inverted pyramid structure, with all the important information presented in the first few lines, it was easy to leave off at any point—an advantage when interest wanes or attention wanders. Student and tutor used these articles to work on scanning and skimming strategies as well as predicting, and figuring out word meanings through context clues.

Some other strategies attempted, that proved less effective for Mark and Mark, were mapping activities and any kind of spelling strategy. Mark W. did not like writing "thought webs", even on his

"It gave him a lot of control and the ability to change predictions."

-Mark F.

favourite topic, hockey, preferring instead to discuss his ideas first, and then write a rough draft and revise if necessary. Mapping seemed to be an irritating, intermediate step for him, and certainly at this stage in his writing development he couldn't see its value. Mark F. said that his student's spelling ability did not appear to improve very much over the tutoring period; in fact his success in spelling words was "more or less random and fluctuated from week to week." Mark F. realized that any attempt to use phonics to help his student spell was fairly futile and that visual methods held the most promise. Nevertheless, this was not an area of real concern since they focussed more on reducing anxiety about spelling than on learning spelling strategies.

In summarizing his student's progress at the end of the year, his tutor mentioned the "highlight" of their newspaper reading as the time when, as Mark W. read the first few lines of an article, he stopped reading and said "that doesn't make sense". Sure enough, there was an error in sentence construction which Mark W. was also able to correct. This monitoring and self-correcting behaviour was apparent in the re-assessment. When I re-assessed Mark W. after seven months of tutoring, both his word recognition score and his comprehension score had increased by a grade level. His reading rate was still quite slow but he showed an improvement in word attack strategies and in self-correction. Mark's progress was particularly encouraging in view of the fact that he had had a disruptive change in his living arrangements during the tutoring sessions and had missed classes for several weeks.

Tom and Theone Stage Two/Three Mini-Case

Tom, one of the first students accepted into the program, was 26 years old, drove his own car and worked in a lumber yard. His general goal was to be able "to read and understand words better." He also wanted to get a job which did not involve such heavy work. In February 1990, Tom was assessed as an upper stage two learner whose word recognition level was two grade levels higher than his comprehension level. Tom's tutor, Theone, came to the project with a degree in education and some experience in special education. She was working part-time in another occupation, but wanted to maintain her interest and experience in the education field through volunteer tutoring.

Tom attended classes twice a week, for two-hour sessions, over a 16 month period from March 1990 through June the following year. He missed very few sessions during this time, despite the fact that he had ongoing car trouble and for a period of time had to change a flat tire each time he left the Learning Centre! From the beginning, Theone found Tom to be "a highly motivated, cooperative, attentive individual... willing to risk working on difficult material." His sense of humour also proved to be an advantage in helping to defuse tense moments. Although initially a little hesitant about joining the larger group at coffee break, perhaps because of some difficulties with his speech, Tom overcame his reluctance fairly quickly and became a regular participant in these

social breaks.

Tom and Theone worked on a variety of comprehension strategies in reading, including predicting, cloze, mapping, information reading technique, examining text structure and vocabulary development. The material selected always reflected Tom's preferences and ranged from cookbooks to adventure novels to a large collection of newspaper clippings on any subject that interested him. Tom often stated a preference for oral reading because he felt it helped him to learn better. He said reading aloud helped him "notice more details" and improved his memory. However, he said that silent reading was "best for speed" and this is the mode he often used for skimming sections of the newspaper at the beginning of each tutoring session.

Tom was generally more apprehensive about writing, but he usually wrote a short piece each class, often in a diary or journal type of format. Theone at first

"A highly motivated cooperative, attentive individual... willing to risk working on the difficult material."

-Theone

My birthday was Monday. I had birthday cake and chocolate. The birthday cake was good and creamy. It was hard to eat the cake. The party was a quite surprise and exciting. I went out for my birthday and was bowling and went out at night and was eating at a restaurant.

-Tom

encouraged daily journal writing but Tom was reluctant to do this; in fact he usually resisted any homework assignments. Initially, the focus in tutorial writing was on generating ideas. Then as Tom became more fluent and comfortable with the process, Theone helped him to work on

They quickly formed a very trusting relationship in which Tom felt free to take risks and make mistakes in his reading and writing.

spelling and mechanics. They also worked with a variety of spelling strategies such as word sorts and cued spelling.

Theone was not only knowledgeable about literacy teaching and learning, but she also empathized with Tom and was always willing to listen to his problems and concerns. They quickly formed a very trusting relationship in which Tom felt free to take risks and make mistakes in his reading and writing. At the same time, Theone did not wish to foster dependency and was ever wary of counselling Tom in daily decisions about his life, although he was clearly unhappy in his job and frustrated by his inability to change his situation.

I did a re-assessment with Tom twice during the 16 month period and each time he demonstrated excellent progress. His word recognition abilities increased two full grade levels, while his comprehension score became commensurate with his word recognition, improving by four full grade levels. He thus moved into the Stage Three level of learning and continued to develop skills within that level. Even allowing for a possibly under-achieving score at his initial assessment, this progress was quite remarkable.

As with so many of the other students, we also saw improvements in Tom's level of confidence and in his inter-personal skills. His speech difficulties became less of an impediment for him as he participated readily in coffee break discussions and began to use the office phone with no hesitation. His family also commented on the fact that he was reading the newspaper, that his range of spoken vocabulary had increased and that he asked questions more often. Indeed, he was said to be generally "more sure of himself". In his own reflections on his progress, Tom said that he was "understanding the sentences more" and

that he "felt good" about what he was learning. He readily chose his best piece of writing as part of his self-evaluation, choosing it both for its increased length and for its level of personal interest to himself.

Stage Three

Three of the students were Stage Three learners when they entered the program. Their scores on informal reading inventories ranged from a grade four level to a grade seven level, in both word recognition and comprehension. One other student also soon moved into this level. Generally, the students at this stage had good strategies for figuring out unknown words but comprehension lagged behind word recognition, substantially so for two of the students. The students at this level were generally fairly comfortable about writing, but varied in their fluency and their concern for correctness.

It is difficult to generalize about strategies at this stage since students vary considerably in their literacy needs. Each of the pairs seemed to take quite different approaches, using a variety of materials, as they worked with individual student concerns and interests. However, a common focus that emerged for all pairs was the ways in which they worked on the structure and organization of language and text.

Stage Three Mini-Case Sherrill, Dana and Meloney

Sherrill was a 24 year old student in her final year at the On Campus program when she started at CHALLENGES, with Dana as her tutor. Sherrill has tunnel vision which prevents her seeing more than a narrow band of print at a time; hence she has difficulty scanning a text or reading very fast. Despite this, she enjoys reading and is particularly fond of the *Anne of Green Gables* stories. She was a serious, committed student who worked diligently and enjoyed her classes. Dana was just beginning a program in journalism studies when she began working one evening a week with Sherrill. In time, Dana's college

work-load became so heavy that she had to withdraw from tutoring. She was replaced by Meloney, who had just completed her B.A.

Through much of the first term, Dana worked on narrative structure with Sherrill, as they read through a number of novels and short stories, including some *Meg Parker* mysteries, *Nightmare Snow*, and stories such as "Tricksy

Mom, Dad, my sister Lori and my brother in-law Jerry make up my family. We also have a pet cat, he is part of our family and his name is Spliff.

I help my Dad with yard work; e.g. cutting the grass and watering the flowers. I also help take out the garbage, feed Spliff, and help with some of the washing. Mom and Dad both help me by taking me to my doctors appointments, and explaining school work that I don't understand

With Dad being retired he helps out more around the house. Dad and I go out for a lot more walks, and spend more time together. Some times he gets up with me to see me off to church and work.

An example of Sherrill's writing

Rabbit" that Sherrill was reading for her On Campus children's literature class. Dana soon discovered that it was essential to preview stories before beginning to read. Through discussion of such aspects as titles and illustrations, Sherrill was able to make predictions and generate background knowledge about the content of the stories and this always improved her subsequent comprehension.

They also frequently used the CAPS strategy (character, aim, problem,

However, a common focus that emerged for all pairs was the ways in which they worked on the structure and organization of language and text.

solution), a self-questioning strategy that provides a form for understanding narrative structure. Some work on mapping the main elements of stories served to reinforce the concept of narrative structure. Sherrill, who already has a good oral vocabulary, also enjoyed working on word meanings in the context of the novels they read. Finally, they also did some work on inferencing or "reading between the lines" as Sherrill liked to call it. This is an area where many students in the project experienced difficulty, but over a number of weeks Sherrill improved her inferencing abilities and became much more adept at making appropriate inferences.

Sherrill adapted to her new tutor, Meloney, with little difficulty. As well as working with some informational kinds of text such as recipes, they also worked on the organizational aspects of writing. Through mapping, they decided on paragraph sub-topics of the main topic and Sherrill then wrote a first draft. Sometimes they also revised and edited into a more polished form, as when they worked on a piece for the CHALLENGES anthology. Meloney noted that by the end of the tutoring sessions, Sherrill had a much clearer sense of how to organize a piece of writing for greater unity and coherence.

Stage Three Mini-Case Sally and Pat

Sally and Pat worked together one evening a week for nine months. At 40 years of age, Sally was married, held a full-time job in a kitchen and was self-supporting. She was a very private person who did not take risks easily, and after a number of years in a group literacy program, she was apprehensive about the idea of one-on-one tutoring.

During my initial assessment with her, Sally stated that she loved to learn, but she could state no specific learning goals.

This caused some concern for her tutor, Pat, a research assistant at a local college, who was tutoring for the first time. She was looking for some direction from her student when planning their tutoring sessions and she felt rather uneasy as they felt their way for the first few weeks, trying to establish a purpose and a program for learning.

At first, Pat focussed on encouraging Sally to borrow and read books from the Learning Centre library and on reading the newspaper. But Sally expressed little interest in reading books, and she said that she preferred the news on the radio or T.V. Because Sally seemed to enjoy writing, Pat decided to shift the focus of their sessions together towards developing Sally's writing skills.

Over a number of weeks, Sally and Pat worked out a system with which both felt comfortable. They would begin by discussing a number of possible topics and Sally would then decide on one topic. The topics were always of a personal nature, many of them relating to Sally's upbringing in an institution and her struggle to achieve independence. Writing about these areas of her life were of great interest to Sally but such writing also involved much risk-taking, as she revealed her thoughts and feelings to Pat. After some discussion of the ideas she would like to include, Sally would then mull them over for a week before going any further.

During their next session together, they engaged in an assisted writing activity with Sally dictating her ideas to Pat in point form, while Pat scribed. Sally liked to follow this procedure since she found it difficult to remember and order her ideas if she was also scribing. Pat then read the piece back to Sally, while Sally re-wrote it in her own hand-writing. Then Sally would take the piece home and develop the ideas more fully. At first, she returned with her pieces written in

Dana soon discovered that it was essential to preview stories before beginning to read.

paragraph form which followed the point form quite closely. However, towards the end of the tutoring period, she began to make more extensive revisions in her pieces, often deleting some ideas, adding new ones, or changing the order of her ideas substantially. Her writing also became much lengthier with some pieces extending to a couple of pages. At this stage, they would work on the editing aspects of the writing process, with Pat always taking her cue from Sally in terms of how much critiquing they would do, and how much correcting Sally was prepared to do.

Pat felt that Sally made considerable growth in terms of her openness about expressing her ideas, as well as in her fluency, and her ability to develop and refine her ideas in writing. As this tutoring phase drew to a close, they were beginning to do more work on paragraphing—a concept with which Sally continued to struggle. She also had problems with run-on and convoluted sentences, and they were trying to rectify this through the notion of “how much you can read in one breath”, rather than through the more abstract concept of “complete thoughts”.

Although Sally enjoyed sharing her writing with Pat she did not wish to have a piece included in the anthology or in this book.

Stage Three Mini-Case Doreen, Pam and Colleen

For at least one student in the Stage Three group of learners, the biggest obstacle to progress was her own lack of understanding of the need to read various forms of text in different ways. Doreen was 29 years old, of Cree origin and a single parent of a 9 year old son. When I first met her she had great concerns about her inability to remember what she read. She scored higher than all other students on word

recognition, but her comprehension score lagged by four grade levels. Doreen expected to be able to remember every word verbatim, and she talked at length about her difficulty with poor memory, which she attributed to seizures.

Her first tutor, Pam, worked mostly on the activity packs “*Learning Basic Social Skills*” and “*Steps to Independent Living*.” Doreen enjoyed this work since one of her goals was to improve both her social skills and her daily living skills. However, she continued to fret about her memory problems and Pam, too, suggested that retention of the material she read was a problem “at some times more so than others”. After three months, this tutor was unable to continue because of work commitments. Doreen was then matched with a new tutor, Colleen, and began coming to the Learning Centre twice a week.

At first, Colleen felt frustrated by Doreen’s worries about her memory, since it surfaced as a concern in most tutorials. Then Colleen took a different tack. She began to focus less on Doreen’s concerns about “remembering” and began to focus on reading for enjoyment. Up to this point Doreen had shown little interest in taking fiction books out of the CHALLENGES library, so Colleen began to discuss some of the books with her and encouraged her to borrow several. Colleen’s down-to-earth, no-nonsense approach began to have an effect on Doreen.

They had several lively discussions about the notion of “having fun” during their tutorials and slowly Doreen’s attitude began to change. She became less gravely serious about the whole business and began to take a more light-hearted approach towards her classes. She also began to take books out of the library regularly and she talked about her enjoyment of many of the books. In a discussion I had with her in the last week

Sally liked to follow this procedure since she found it difficult to remember and order her ideas if she was also scribing.

of classes, I asked about a book she'd just finished and she was able to give me the gist of it with little difficulty. She smiled broadly as she said "you just want to know the main idea of what it's all about, eh, like who the characters are and a little bit about what happened to them?"

As Doreen began to relax about her "memory problem" she also began to discuss other concerns in her life, especially her need for more friends and a better social life. When we suggested a couple of programs set up for people with disabilities, Doreen told us firmly and eloquently that she didn't want to go to "special" programs, that she just wanted to be able to meet people of all kinds who would accept her for herself. Around this time also, Doreen proudly showed us a card of thanks she had received from her son's school where she had worked as a volunteer in the reading program!

As we reflected on Doreen's progress, we felt that once she was convinced that narrative structure did not demand

memory for every detail, she was able to relax and enjoy her fictional reading. In turn, she began to feel successful and her self-esteem improved so that she was able to speak up for herself and challenge our misguided suggestions for ways of helping her further. Her concerns about memory surfaced again when I did a re-assessment using an informal reading inventory (which, of course requires the reader to remember much of the detail of passages they read) and it was necessary to give her lots of reassurance again. However, despite her anxiety, Doreen scored much better this time on comprehension measures. In fact her comprehension score was now level with her word recognition score — an increase of several grade levels. The happy smile on her face as I shared this information with her was a change indeed from the anxious, puzzled looks of the first assessment. Doreen was now beginning to see herself as a successful reader and writer.

Doreen told us firmly and eloquently that she didn't want to go to "special" programs, that she just wanted to be able to meet people of all kinds who would accept her for herself.

What I Think About Challenges

I think it's helping me in a lot of good ways even more than I would expect sometimes. It's me that just needs to get things to happen. I believe if I keep trying to do what's offered for me I will make it and change my life.

First it's helped me to learn and, understand how to start reading books. I'm trying to learn how to work with memory learning also to come to know how that fits.

Then I'm getting involved in trying to meet people that I can in my life to try to make my life, interesting if I can and, learn how not to be afraid to invite people to become friends.

I'm thankful for the people I've come to know and meet in Challenges that are helping me.

Doreen

Doreen's writing

The Good Things You Can Expect To Happen

When considering the progress of the students in the CHALLENGES Literacy Project, it must be remembered that the actual tutoring period was quite short. Only four students were tutored twice a week over a period of 16 months (with Summer and Christmas breaks) for a total tutoring time of approximately 150 hours. The remaining students were tutored over an 8-9 month period with class time ranging from approximately 60 to 120 hours, depending on whether they attended once or twice a week.

All of the students made some progress and many made extremely good progress. This section will describe some of the good things you can expect to happen when people with developmental disabilities are given an opportunity to learn.

Changing Concepts of Reading and Writing

It was evident from the initial assessments that the majority of students focussed on the mechanical aspects of reading and writing as being the most important features of these processes. Most students mentioned "saying the words right", "knowing big words", "knowing all the letters" or "knowing the alphabet" and "reading big books like dictionaries", as characterizing good readers. Strategies for identifying

unknown words focussed on such things as "sounding out", "saying all the letters", and "knowing the alphabet."

In writing too, students were highly print focussed. A couple of students suggested that "thinking hard" helped you to be a good writer, but the majority mentioned "good printing", "neat handwriting", "writing, not printing", "nice copying", "knowing the letters" and "knowing commas and stuff like that" as the attributes of a good writer. One student summed it all up by saying that "good readers can say the letters and then they know the words, and good writers can copy lots of pages."

During the re-assessments in May 1991, some marked differences could be observed in students' concepts about reading and writing. "Knowing what it means" was mentioned by several students. "Improving your understanding" was also emphasized by two students. Although "sounding out" continued to be the standard decoding strategy mentioned, many students also talked about skipping the word and reading ahead, thinking about "what's sensible in there" and "looking at the first letter to guess what makes sense".

One student, whose tutor had spent substantial amounts of time doing handwriting practice, suggested that

CHALLENGES Literacy Project

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

1. Name: Soni

2. Have you enjoyed coming to CHALLENGES This term? yes

3. Can you say why or why not? Beccs I having fun here

4. Describe your favourite activity in these classes? reading words

5. Which activity did you least enjoy? ~~to~~ I like it all.

6. Do you do some reading and writing work at home? always ☒ sometimes ☐ never ☐

7. Can you think of some things that you might be able to do at home, to help improve your reading and writing? writing words

8. Can you choose your best piece of work for the term? photo album

9. Why is this your best piece? Beccs I look at the pictures

10. Are there new things you would like to learn in the fall? writing

Sample Self Evaluation form that tutors helped students complete.

"good printing" makes a good writer. However, he also added "good stories" to his list of attributes, a reflection, perhaps of the story-writing his other tutor encouraged. This "story-writing" ability was mentioned by several students now as one thing that makes a good writer. One elaborated that "you need to have good stories to tell and then think about how to say it". Another student said that writing mystery stories makes a good writer, while a third mentioned having "good ideas" to write about as well as "thinking of interesting titles" and "writing funny stories". The concept of revision to "make it better for people to understand" was also mentioned by two students who were at the time preparing their contributions for the CHALLENGES anthology.

Self-worth,
Self-esteem,
Self-confidence

Several students, particularly at the Stage One level initially displayed apprehension and lack of confidence about their ability to do literacy tasks. Comments such as "I can't do that", or "I don't know anything about that", or "I can't write/read on my own" were common in the early days of tutoring. Lack of self-esteem was also displayed in loud defensive comments from one student to the effect that "You can't trick me", or "See, I can do this better than you." Another student demanded constant praise and reassurance that she was doing well, asking for such praise numerous times each lesson. Still other students demonstrated by body language their belief that they were not capable of reading and writing.

Students' perspectives: On a self-evaluation that tutors helped students complete (see sample left), all students said that they felt they were making progress; more than half felt they were making progress "every lesson". They expressed similar sentiments to me in my re-assessments with them. Students commented that they were "understanding more" or "reading and speaking better". One student said that she felt "comfortable writing stories" while another liked doing her own journal because she could "express [her] own ideas as much as [she] wants to". Many students expressed "good" feelings about coming to the Learning Centre. They said they were "happy to come here"; "it feels good". One student said "Every day I read a book, and that helps me learn." Others said they had "really enjoyed the classes and had learned a lot" and that they "liked doing the work". One student summed up her progress by saying: "Little by little, every day, I know I'm learning more and improving my life."

Home perspectives: Results of a home survey (where appropriate) of students involved in the program also indicated positive changes in levels of confidence and self-esteem. Many parents or other support persons described their students as "being proud" of their work and wanting to share it with others. One young woman was described as "happier, more confident" since she came to CHALLENGES; a young man was described as "more self-confident, he asks more questions now and he is less worried about his reading." For one student the program was described as "her life, she loves it and talks about it all the time." She was deemed to be taking more risks in her reading and was "less uptight about it, but more anxious to learn." Many homes spontaneously mentioned an increase in confidence and in feeling good about their work. One mother said of her daughter: "Her verbal skills are more well-developed and she takes pride in her reading and writing." The outreach worker of another student stated that "She is accepting challenges and exploring opportunities that would not have been considered even a year ago."

Responsibility for learning

Taking responsibility for one's own learning is often considered a sign of progress in literacy development. We tried to encourage this kind of responsibility by including students in all decision-making related to lesson plans and content of lessons, as well as in evaluation of progress and learning. It was not always easy. Many of these students have been encouraged to be dependent on others, often unnecessarily so. It was clear, too, that up to half of the students accepted into the program were there because others saw it as "good for them", and they themselves sometimes had no real sense of purpose in participating in the program.

Overall, this was an area of slow progress;

it is difficult to change a lifetime's conditioning. Some of the most difficult students to work with were those who seemed to feel that all factors related to their learning were external ones: parents were "too busy to help them read", or "the kids made too much noise to do any work", or "there wasn't enough time" because they had other activities every evening. In one or two cases it took over a year to persuade students that they did have some control and responsibility for work done both inside and outside of class. After discussion with her tutor and after a routine of activities had already been established, one student took complete responsibility for planning the order and timing of the schedule for each class. Once she accepted this idea, she also began to put a little more time and effort into her homework and expressed pride in her efforts. For someone who found it very difficult to hold any job because of her defensive behaviour, or to maintain a working relationship with a social worker, her perseverance and growing sense of responsibility for her learning in these classes was admirable.

Another technique that encouraged a sense of responsibility for learning was the use of portfolio assessment. Students and tutors together discussed the work they had done over several months and the students chose pieces of their best work to share with me. This work ranged from a story read onto a tape, to a favourite book, to a pack of sight words, to stories and patterned poems, to word puzzles, to letters and photo-stories. As the weeks went by, students had little difficulty in choosing "best" pieces of work and almost all were chosen because they were "about me" or "about things I like" or they were "important to me." The importance of literacy activities directly related to their own lives was a recurring theme as students were encouraged to take on more responsibility for their own learning.

"She is accepting challenges and exploring opportunities that would not have been considered even a year ago."

One student took complete responsibility for planning the order and timing of the schedule for each class.

Progress as Measured by an Informal Reading Inventory.

Of the 17 students who completed the project, 13 made measurable progress on the *Bader Reading and Language Inventory*. In terms of word recognition, nine students made one grade level improvement in their instructional level scores on word lists and passages, with two students gaining two years in word recognition. The remaining two students did not increase their instructional level scores; however, one was already at the grade eight level, while the other obtained an independent level score at her previous instructional level and also recognized several words at higher levels.

All but one of the 13 students who increased their levels of word recognition also increased their comprehension scores, with four students of the total 17 unable to attempt the comprehension task because of inadequate sight vocabulary. Gains in comprehension were generally greater than gains in word recognition. Six students scored one grade level higher in comprehension, two scored two grades higher, two scored three grades higher and two scored four grades higher.

Gains were made at all levels up to grade eight in this admittedly small sample. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that it is possible for students who have been labelled developmentally disabled to progress at average rates given one-on-one tutoring opportunities. Indeed, a few students made remarkable gains, particularly in the area of comprehension. Almost all students demonstrated a greater degree of confidence in their reading ability in the post-testing situation, as well as an increase in strategic processing. One student proudly asked: "You didn't know I'd learned this much did you?"

The four students who showed no gains

on post-testing were all early Stage One learners. However, each of these students could recognize 10-30 de-contextualized words by sight, and they were able to read their own language experience stories with fairly good accuracy and fluency. They still did not feel comfortable reading alone, but preferred the security of assisted reading. Since many adults who are labelled developmentally disabled will likely fall into the category of Stage One learners, it is worth noting that they will need to be given time to develop measurable skills.

Given the volunteer nature of literacy programs such as this one, tutors need to see progress in order to feel a sense of achievement and satisfaction in their work. The length of time that individual students should be given to demonstrate progress remains open to debate. Much will depend on the extent to which students are motivated and prepared to put in time outside of the tutoring sessions, and on the support they are able to get from others in the home. Much will depend also on the commitment, perseverance and patience of individual tutors and on the type of support they are able to get from literacy coordinators.

*"You didn't
know I'd
learned this
much did you?"*

The Three A's of the Coordinator's Role

As society, in general, moves towards integrated programs for people with developmental disabilities there will be a growing expectation that adults with learning difficulties can access the same literacy programs available to others in the community. While recognizing the limitations placed on coordinators by funding levels and availability of volunteers, it is clear that literacy coordinators play a crucial role in the successful inclusion of such adults in volunteer tutoring programs. Our experience in the CHALLENGES Literacy Project suggests that coordinators who wish to include adults with a developmental handicap in their programs will require three essential characteristics: advocacy, approachability and availability.

Advocacy

A most important asset for coordinators who include people with learning difficulties in their programs is a very firm belief that people who have been labelled intellectually disabled can learn. This belief -or its converse- will quickly be communicated to the tutors and, in turn, to the students, most of whom will have experienced many years of failure in literacy and will come to classes with no real belief in themselves as learners. Unless tutors are able to transmit their

own sincere belief in the students' abilities to learn, then the students will not see themselves as successful learners and will not be successful in learning.

It is the coordinator's first task to recruit tutors to work specifically with those labelled disabled, and to demonstrate by both words and actions that learning is possible for these students, that progress is possible and that literacy for these individuals is both desirable and worthwhile. This commitment towards inclusion of the handicapped in literacy programs is essential if society is to fully accept the rights of those labelled disabled to develop literacy skills.

A coordinator should also know what other services are available in order to make referrals to other agencies where appropriate. Very often, for example, a student can benefit from speech therapy if this can be found, or can be helped to live more independently with help from an outreach worker. Researching and maintaining a list of agencies or organisations that can provide such services is not too demanding in terms of time, but can be very helpful for students who do not have such knowledge themselves.

Approachability

As well as initial tutor training, a coordinator must also be prepared to

There will be a growing expectation that adults with learning difficulties can access the same literacy programs available to others in the community.

So when schedules go awry and students show up late or fail to show up at all, the coordinator usually has to act as troubleshooter.

provide both moral and practical support to tutors working with disabled adults until the relationships are well established. This entails maintaining an open-door policy as much as possible, especially when tutor/student pairs are meeting in the early stages of their relationship. All of the doubts, fears and inadequacies felt by inexperienced tutors in average tutoring situations can be exacerbated when working with adults who have been labelled disabled.

Simply being there so that tutors can chat about their apprehensions and difficulties, as well as their joys and successes, is an important part of the coordinator's role. Very often, tutors need little more than reassurance about the techniques and strategies they are trying; they need to know that there's someone there to help, even if the help isn't needed. Being approachable is not always easy when there are so many other administrative demands on coordinators, but an attitude of approachability will be worthwhile in terms of fostering comfortable tutoring pairs.

Availability

As well as being approachable, a coordinator must be available to help. In a very concrete way she or he can provide suggestions about resources and assistance with preparation of materials. A coordinator must also often act as an intermediary between students and tutors. The degree of independence of disabled students can vary considerably, and not always in relation to the degree of their handicap. Of the 20 students in the CHALLENGES project eight were able to make their own arrangements for attending classes and had little difficulty in adhering to their schedules or in letting tutors know when a cancellation was necessary. The other twelve students required some help from family members, friends or social workers to establish

schedules, and a few required help to maintain schedules. Six students relied either on DATS or on parents to get them to and from the learning centre.

So when schedules go awry and students show up late or fail to show up at all, the coordinator usually has to act as troubleshooter. While such problems are not uncommon in regular tutoring programs, when pairs meet in a Learning Centre where a coordinator or assistant is available, tutors often look to staff to resolve these difficulties. It is only by being willing to make phone calls, review schedules with students, or set up meetings with students' support systems, that a coordinator can prevent tutor frustration and early drop-out. The degree of tolerance, by tutors, of such difficulties will vary but having a third party to ease the way goes a long way towards helping them over initial rough patches.

While the amount of responsibility that tutors are willing to take with respect to arranging schedules and making contacts with homes and other support agencies can vary, most seem to welcome a fair degree of coordinator involvement at first. As tutors begin to feel more at ease with their students, many will assume greater responsibility for making plans directly with their students, including contacting homes or agencies. They should eventually be able to work with the same degree of support from the coordinator as any other tutor working in a literacy program.

Being available to professionals from other agencies is a desirable though not always practical goal for coordinators because of time constraints. A minimal amount of contact with social service agencies is necessary, however, in order to obtain relevant background information about students and to learn from the experience of others. In turn, there is much that coordinators can offer

other agencies in terms of sharing teaching strategies. For instance support workers could be invited to tutor training workshops so that they understand and help to reinforce what is taught in classes.

A final area where a coordinator can be available, if time permits, is in facilitating the transference and application of literacy skills to the home environment. In the CHALLENGES project we attempted to address this need by holding two meetings for parents and other support persons of the students. We explained our philosophy of teaching and talked about some of the strategies we were using in the classes. We also offered paired reading as one strategy that could be used at home to support literacy growth. Such efforts are well worthwhile, since the students who make the best progress are invariably those who do extra work at home and are supported in their literacy development, in positive ways, by others who are significant in their lives.

Where Do We Go From Here ?

*The program
should be an
integrated
rather than a
segregated one.*

As we moved into the final phase of the CHALLENGES Literacy Project, the predominant feeling from our advisory committee was that the work must continue, but that the program should be an integrated rather than a segregated one. This follows naturally from the growing belief that integration of people with disabilities — from the school level to all other areas of society — is the primary means of ensuring that people who have been labelled disabled or handicapped will receive both justice and acceptance in our communities.

Thus, we decided that the CHALLENGES Literacy Project will reintegrate with the PROSPECTS Adult Literacy Association, its sponsoring body, under one coordinator. The Learning Centre which is so valued by tutors and students will continue to be a feature of an expanded PROSPECTS, with sufficient space to accommodate any pairs who wish to tutor there. In addition, at least one person will be hired as a tutor assistant to provide the support for which most tutors in the project have expressed the need. A second tutor assistant will also be hired if sufficient funding becomes available. Two such tutor assistants, who are themselves experienced in tutoring and knowledgeable about the teaching and learning of reading, writing and numeracy, will be necessary in a large

literacy program which includes a significant number of learners who are labelled developmentally disabled.

Beyond the limits of this program, the question that remains is whether more coordinators will begin to include adults with developmental handicaps in their literacy programs. The most recent statistics (Report on the Alberta Literacy Inventory, 1990) indicate that only 38% of literacy programs in the province serve people with developmental disabilities, while twelve other identifiable groups are served by a higher percentage of programs. My hope is that this book will help to convince coordinators that efforts made to provide literacy instruction to the disabled are indeed worthwhile and rewarding for all concerned, and that stronger efforts must be made to serve this long-neglected group of people.

Along with goodwill on the part of literacy workers, increased funding from governments and other funding agencies is also necessary. Volunteer tutors who are willing to take on the challenge of teaching adults with developmental handicaps need support from paid staff if they are to be successful in their work. More money to lend support in this area will almost certainly save money in other areas as these adults use their newly developed literacy skills and confidence to live more independent productive

lives.

Other educational options must also be considered for adults with developmental disabilities. It is sadly ironic that their potential for learning is often just beginning to be tapped when their full-time schooling ends. Yet the percentage of institutional programs serving this client group is an abysmally low 8% (Report on the Alberta Literacy Inventory, 1990). We need to explore, within our communities, ways of enabling them to continue education in a full-time or part-time capacity, so that they have the opportunities for lifelong learning that we all have.

But for many students who have a developmental handicap, just as for any other students, the warm relationship of a one-on-one tutoring program can be a first step in experiencing success in literacy learning. We just need to give them that chance.

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Appendix B: Annotated Bibliography

This bibliography was compiled by Moira Hooton, the CHALLENGES Tutor Assistant, as an addendum to the Adult Literacy Resource Materials bibliography produced by Pat Campbell.

LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY SERIES

published by: PRU

Title	Cost	Level	Year
<i>Going by Bus</i>	£1.50	1	1988
<i>Out and About</i>	£1.60	1	1987

These books are specifically created by and for persons with mental disabilities and their instructors. They are helpful in showing some of the aspects of living in a community. The print is large with only a small amount on each page. Meaningful context is provided by illustrative photographs matching each page of print. The material is British so some of the vocabulary may be unfamiliar. However, it is readily understood in context.

THE MEANWOOD PARK SERIES

published by: PRU

Cost: £5.75 per set of five, £1.20 individually

Title	Author	Level	Year
<i>Roy & the Chocolate Bar</i>	J. Satterthwaite	1-2	1979
<i>A Good Saturday</i>	J. Satterthwaite	1-2	1980
<i>Kevin & the Big Problem</i>	J. Satterthwaite	1-2	1980
<i>Alan Saves the Day</i>	J. Satterthwaite	1-2	1981
<i>Lost in the Hollies</i>	J. Satterthwaite	1-2	1982

This is a series of stories for and about severely mentally handicapped young adults based in a hospital/group home environment. The stories deal with everyday decision-making and problem solving. According to the PRU catalogue: "The aim of the series is to provide story books which are fully adult in nature and presentation but extremely simple in plot and language, and which are imaginative and entertaining rather than didactic." The material is British, and although there are a few instances of unfamiliar vocabulary, the large print and contextual photographs make the stories easily comprehensible.

Meeting Challenges

DELPH MANOR SERIES

published by: PRU

4 titles: £3.70 per set of four, £1.10 individually

<u>Title</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>To Camp or not to Camp?</i>	2	1986
<i>Workbook for To Camp or not to Camp?</i>	2	1988
<i>Camping On!</i>	2	1986
<i>Workbook for Camping On!</i>	2	1989

The two books of this series with their accompanying workbooks were created and written by the residents of Delph Manor Hostel. They show the use of decision-making, organizational and planning skills that can be encouraged by taking part in a group activity such as camping. The books are illustrated with plenty of photographs and the student's own drawings and writings. As with other material of British origin there are a few unfamiliar words but the context provides enough clues to make the variations easy to understand.

READERS SERIES

published by: ALBSU

5 titles:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>Three or Five Minutes</i>	Betty Hammond	£0.50	1	1990
<i>Dogs and Roses</i>	Karen Beggs	£1.50	2	1988
<i>Stab in the Heart</i>	Mike Wilson	£1.25	2	1988
<i>A Kind of Leaving</i>	Millie Richards	£1.00	5	1988
<i>Cockney Adonis</i>	Kate Dowdall	£1.00	5	1988

This British series of books, designed for adult beginner readers, has proved very popular. "Cockney Adonis" and "Dogs and Roses" are realistic contemporary love stories, well illustrated with photographs. "A Kind of Leaving" deals with the problems of coping with a difficult family situation and finding a place of one's own. The many colour photographs add to the realism of the text. It should be noted that there is a certain amount of Trinidadian dialect in this book. The other two titles in the series are illustrated by line drawings. "Three to Five Minutes" is a harsh, uncompromising story about the thoughts of a young mother as she and her children undergo a nuclear attack, and "A Stab in the Heart" is a thriller set in 1940's America, written in a style reminiscent of Raymond Chandler.

ATTENTION SPAN STORIES

published by: Jamestown

distributed by: Fitzhenry & Whiteside

5 titles: \$7.95 per title

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>Star Trip</i>	Lee Mountain	1-2	1978
<i>Survival Trip</i>	Lee Mountain	2	1978
<i>Jungle Trip</i>	Lee Mountain	2	1978
<i>Sports Trip</i>	Lee Mountain	2-3	1978
<i>Time Trip</i>	Lee Mountain	3	1978

This adventure series is designed for young adult low level readers. The purpose behind the series is to lengthen the attention span and reinforce the comprehension and sequencing skills of the student. Each story is divided into one-page episodes matched to a full page illustration which provides intriguing context to the print. Each episode gives the reader the choice of three different cliff-hangers and thus the ability to determine the direction of the adventure: a type of Choose-your-own-adventure series. By taking different routes the reader can create a new adventure each time. Each book includes an answer key and instruction notes.

FAST TRACK READING SERIES

published by: **The Perfection Form Co.**
distributed by: **Mind Resources Inc.**

6 titles: \$2.65 per title

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>Kid Brother & Other Stories</i>	Dianne Swenson	2-3	1984
<i>An Ended Friendship & Other Stories</i>	Dianne Swenson	2-3	1984
<i>Serving Time at Camp & Other Stories</i>	Dianne Swenson	2-3	1984
<i>The Well-Kept Secret & Other Stories</i>	Dianne Swenson	2-3	1984
<i>The Day Dad Cried & Other Stories</i>	Dianne Swenson	2-3	1984
<i>Teacher Trouble & Other Stories</i>	Dianne Swenson	2-3	1984

The Fast Track series provides high interest low level reading material for young adults. It focuses on the problems that confront people in contemporary society: abuse, alcoholism, death, difficulties in relationships, drugs, handicaps, peer pressures and love. Each book contains five stories of about 20 pages each. The print is large and the vocabulary and sentence structure simple. However the books few illustrations are randomly placed and not well contextualized. A Teacher's Guide and reproducible activity books are also available.

SECOND CHANCE SERIES

published by: **Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy**

1 title: \$4.50

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>Never Give Up!</i>	Royal Desjardins	2-3	1990

Royal Desjardins learned to read and write at PEOPLES WORDS AND CHANGE, and is now a volunteer tutor with this program. Using his own life experiences he wrote this book as a resource for other adults learning to read. "Never Give Up!" is a moving account of a child's feelings of loneliness and deprivation as he grew up in an institution. The story is simply written, with large print, and is attractively illustrated with black and white line drawings on most pages.

STORMY NIGHT STORIES

published by: **New Readers Press**
distributed by: **Artel Educational Resources**

10 titles: \$24.75 per set of ten.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>Who Can You Trust?</i>	Malcolm McClintick	3-4	1988
<i>Toasted Onions</i>	Augusta Hancock	3-4	1988
<i>The Crystal Set</i>	Mary Braund	3-4	1988
<i>A Dash of Murder</i>	Jack Morrison	3-4	1988
<i>New Orleans Getaway</i>	Clark Howard	3-4	1988
<i>The Stolen Romney</i>	Edgar Wallace	3-4	1988
<i>Mr. Strang Picks Up the Pieces</i>	William Brittain	3-4	1988
<i>Mini-Scam</i>	Richard MacFarlane	3-4	1988
<i>The Problem of the Pink Post Office</i>	Edward D. Hoch	3-4	1988
<i>Line of Fire</i>	Helen Nielsen	3-4	1988
<i>+ Teacher's Guide</i>	Rosanne Keller	3-4	1988

The Stormy Night Stories consist of ten individual mysteries which come with a teacher's guide and a storage box. The stories are adaptations from short stories originally published in the Ellery Queen and Alfred Hitchcock mystery magazines. The plots are interesting and cleverly presented. The booklets themselves are each sixteen pages long and have no illustrations. The

vocabulary in the stories roughly correlates to the vocabulary found in the "Laubach Way to Reading" series, and word lists are provided with each story. The more difficult vocabulary and lack of illustrations make this series unsuitable for the stage one learner.

SPOTLIGHT LIBRARY SERIES

published by: **Steck-Vaughn**

distributed by: **Artel Educational Resources**

6 titles: \$54.50 per set of six, \$5.50 individually

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>Spotlight on Movie Stars</i>	Randal C. Hill	3	1990
<i>Spotlight on T.V. Stars</i>	Randal C. Hill	3	1990
<i>Spotlight on Music Stars</i>	Randal C. Hill	3	1990
<i>Spotlight on Rock Stars</i>	Randal C. Hill	3	1990
<i>Spotlight on Sports Stars</i>	Randal C. Hill	5-6	1990
<i>Spotlight on Sports Stars II</i>	Randal C. Hill	5-6	1990

A high interest fairly low reading level series of magazine format books appealing to young adults. The series comes in a boxed classroom set which includes two copies each of the six titles. There are eight four-page stories per book followed by two pages of exercises concentrating on sequencing, vocabulary and literal level comprehension questions. The series is well illustrated with high-impact photographs, and the superstar subjects are currently famous, which greatly adds to the interest of the series.

POP SERIES

published by: **ALBSU**

12 titles: \$5.00 per set of twelve, \$0.45 individually

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>John Lennon</i>	Peter Benyon	4-5	1988
<i>Elvis Presley</i>	Karen Beggs	5	1988
<i>The Police</i>	Mike Wilson	5	1988
<i>U2</i>	Kate Preston	5-6	1988
<i>Diana Ross</i>	Kate Preston	6	1988
<i>Madonna</i>	Peter Benyon	6	1988
<i>The Rolling Stones</i>	Peter Benyon	-	1988
<i>Bob Dylan</i>	Karen Beggs	6	1988
<i>Bob Marley</i>	Karen Beggs	6	1988
<i>David Bowie</i>	Mike Wilson	6	1988
<i>The Sex Pistols</i>	Mike Wilson	6	1988
<i>Tina Turner</i>	Kate Preston	6-7	1988

This series of rock biographies provides a fascinating, and sometimes scandalous, look at some of the "Greats" of Rock'n Roll. Since the series focuses on factual information there are many proper nouns in the text. This might increase the level of difficulty for those students who have problems with decoding. The books are illustrated with black and white photographs.

IN THE KNOW SERIES

published by: **New Readers Press**

distributed by: **Artel Educational Resources**

Cost: \$6.95 per workbook, \$7.50 per Teacher's Guide

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Year</u>
<i>In the Know 1</i>	Michael P. O'Donnell & Margo Wood	1987
<i>In the Know 2</i>	Michael P. O'Donnell & Margo Wood	1987
<i>In the Know 3</i>	Michael P. O'Donnell & Margo Wood	1987
<i>In the Know 4</i>	Michael P. O'Donnell & Margo Wood	1987

In the Know is a well thought out supplementary reading series developed specifically for adults. The main focus of this graded series is informational reading on interesting and varied topics. There are simple comprehension questions at the first level, but some inference questions at the higher levels. The series integrates both reading and writing activities and at the higher levels some word analysis tasks. It is recommended that the exercises be done interactively with tutor/student discussion rather than as mere worksheets. Some follow up activities can also be completed independently in tutoring sessions, or for homework. Each topic is presented in an attractive two to three-page spread layout, with large print, and is appropriately illustrated with black and white photographs.

TUTOR RESOURCES:

ALBSU also publishes resource packs, handbooks, reports, leaflets, posters, and other literacy items. Their catalogue provides listings and descriptions of their publications, of which we found the following useful:

Developing Communication Skills

Learning Again - A Guide to Helping Dysphasic Adults With Basic Communication Skills

Literacy and Partially Sighted Adults: An Introductory Handbook

Literacy Work With Bilingual Students: A Resource for Tutors

Numeracy Training

An Introduction to Numeracy Teaching

Viewpoints 2: Special Needs

Viewpoints 4: Literacy for What?

Word Processing and Language Skills: A Practical Handbook for ABE Tutors

Working Together: An Approach to Functional Literacy

Working on Writing

Write - Away from it all: A Guide to Writing Events

PRU also publishes a variety of core materials for teaching access and functional literacy skills. Some of their publications are listed below:

Guidelines: Guidelines to Literacy Teaching

Dictionary Skills

Understanding Instructions

Using Your Reference Skills

Meeting Challenges

Listed below are some other publications that are useful resources on literacy and developmental disabilities:

- ❑ Butler, Shelley. *Learning about Literacy and Disability*. (1990) St. Christopher House Adult Literacy Program, 248 Ossington Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M6J 3A2
- ❑ Scottish Education Council *Moving Ahead: A new handbook for tutors helping adults with learning difficulties*. West Coates House, 90 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, Scotland
- ❑ The G. Allan Roeher Institute (1990) *Literacy and Labels: A Look at Literacy Policy and People with a Mental Handicap*. Kinsman Building, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ont. M3J 2R6
- ❑ The G. Allan Roeher Institute (1991) *The Right to Read and Write*. Kinsman Building, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ont. M3J 2R6

Videos useful for tutor training:

- ❑ *Lifeline to Literacy* and *Double Jeopardy*, TV Ontario (available through TV Ontario, Box 200, Station Q, Toronto M4T 2T1)
- ❑ *We Can Do It: The People First Story* (available through local branches of the Community Living Association)

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